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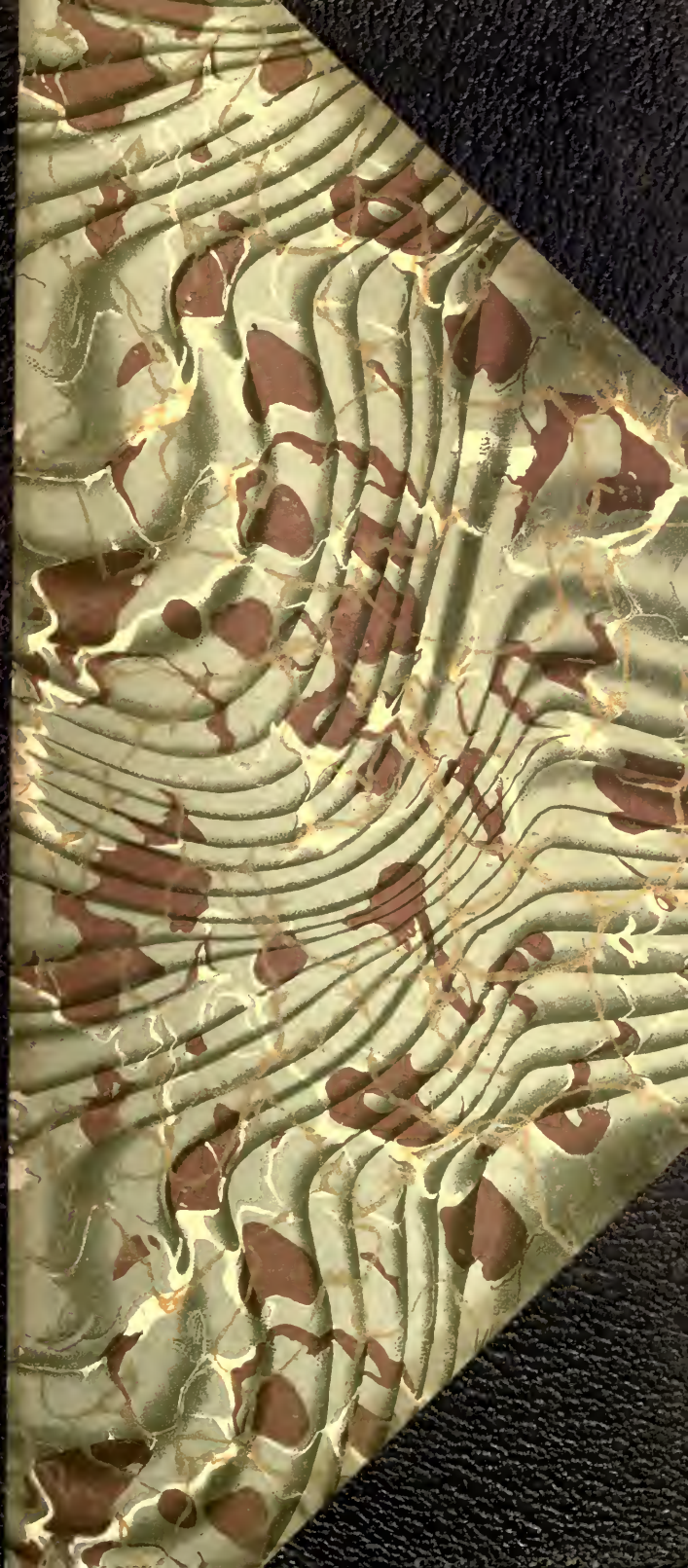
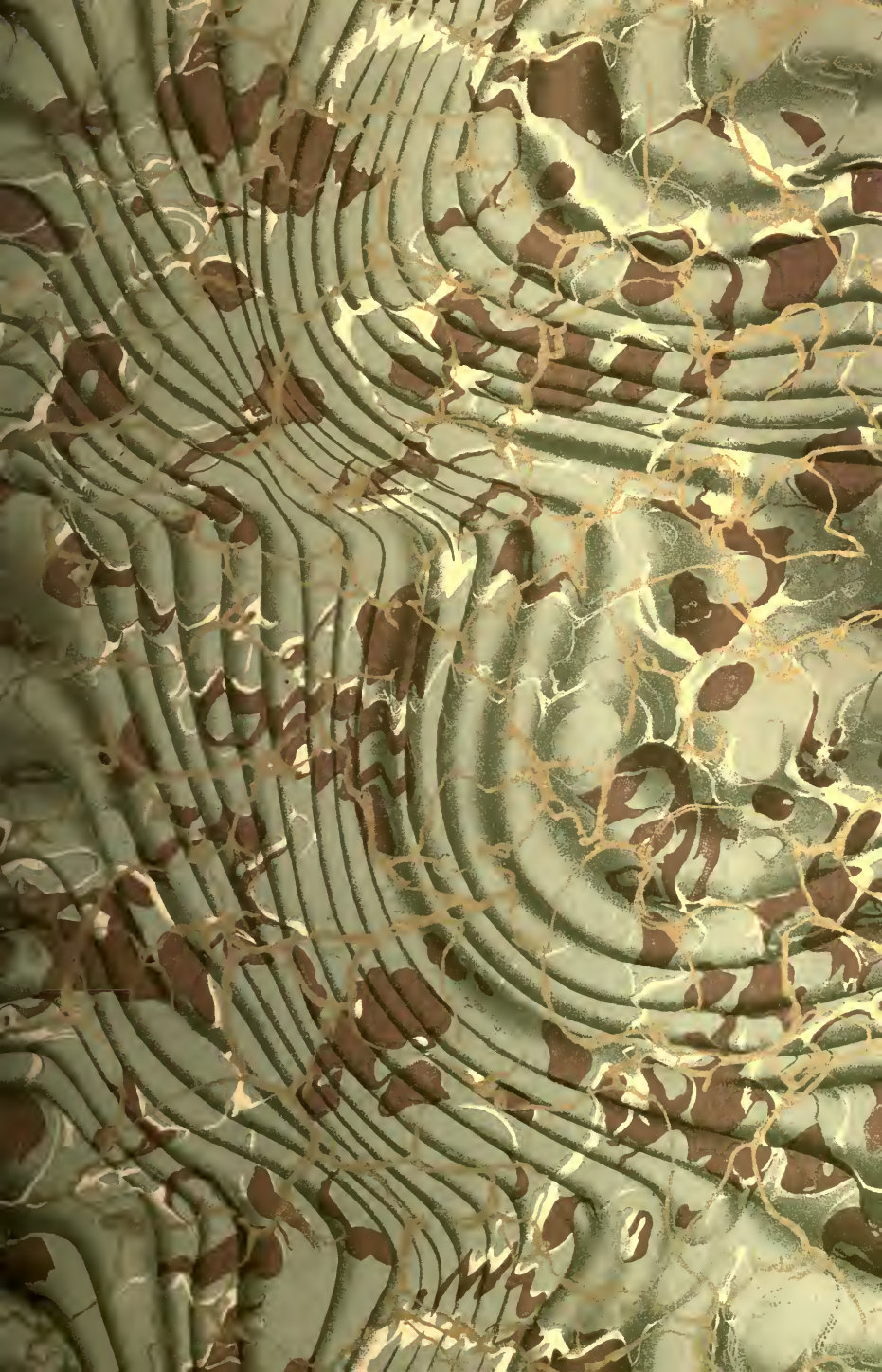


I am a heritage because I bring you years of thought and the lore of time — I impart yet I can not speak — I have traveled among the peoples of the earth — I am a rover — Oft-times I stray from the fireside of the one who loves and cherishes me - who misses me when I am gone — Should you find me vagrant please send me home - among my brothers - on the book shelves of .....

ALFRED SANTELL



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VICTOR HUGO.

"O STAY, HORTENSIA; CAN YOU FLY ME,
CAN YOU AVOID ME?"

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VOLUME XVIII

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1906

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THE DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

VOLTAIRE

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOL. IV

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THE SCOTCH WOMAN

Represented at PARIS in 1760.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Mr. FABRICE, master of a Coffee-house.
Miss LINDON, a Scotchwoman.
Lord MONTROSS, a Scotchman.
Lord MURRAY.
POLLY, maid to Miss Lindon.
FREEPORT, a Merchant of London.
WASP, a Writer.
Lady ALTON.
Several English Gentlemen frequenting the Coffee-house, Servants, Messengers, &c.

SCENE LONDON.

Voltaire dashed off this comedy in eight days, to ridicule Fréron, who had unfavorably criticised *Candide*. It was first published as by Hume, or Home, author of the tragedy *"Douglas."*

THE SCOTCH WOMAN.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The scene represents a coffee-house, with apartments on the same floor on each side communicating with it.

WASP.

[*At one corner of the room reading the papers. Coffee, pen and ink, etc., on the table before him.*]

A plague on this vile news! here are places and pensions given to above twenty people, and nothing for me! a present of a hundred guineas to a subaltern for doing his duty! a great merit indeed! so much to the inventor of a machine to lessen the number of hands; so much to a pilot; so much settled on men of letters, but nothing for me! here's another pension, and another—but the deuce a farthing for Wasp [*he throws down the paper and walks about*] and yet I have done the state some service; I have written more than any one man in England; I have raised the price of paper; and yet nothing is done for me: but I will be revenged on all those whom the world calls men of merit: I have got something already by speaking ill of others; and if I can but contrive to do them a real mischief, my fortune is made. I have praised fools, and calumniated every good quality and perfection of human nature, and yet can scarce live by it: in short, to be a great man, you must not be content with slander and destruction, but endeavor to be

really hurtful. [*To the master of the coffee-house.*] Good morrow to you, Mr. Fabrice. Well, Mr. Fabrice, everybody's affairs, I find, go well but mine; it is intolerable.

FABRICE.

Indeed, indeed, Mr. Wasp, you make yourself a great many enemies.

WASP.

I believe I excite a little envy.

FABRICE.

On my soul I believe not; but rather a passion of a very different kind: to be free, for I have really a friendship for you, I am extremely concerned to hear people talk of you as they do: how do you contrive to be so universally hated?

WASP.

It is because I have merit, Mr. Fabrice.

FABRICE.

That may possibly be; but you are the only person who ever told me so: they say you are a very ignorant fellow: but that is nothing; they say, moreover, that you are ill-natured and malicious; that gives me concern, as it must every honest man.

WASP.

I assure you I have a good and tender heart. I do indeed now and then speak a little freely of the men; but for the women, Mr. Fabrice, I love them all, provided they are handsome. As a proof of it, I must absolutely insist on your introducing me to your amiable lodger, whom I have never yet been able to converse with.

FABRICE.

Upon honor, Mr. Wasp, that young lady will never do for you; for she never praises herself, or speaks ill of anybody else.

WASP.

She speaks ill of nobody, because, I suppose, she knows nobody: are you not in love with her, Fabrice?

FABRICE.

Not I indeed, sir; she has something in her air so noble, that I dare not think of it—besides, her virtue—

WASP.

[*Laughing.*

Ha! ha! ha! her virtue indeed!

FABRICE.

Why so merry, sir? think you there is no such thing as virtue?—but I hear a coach at the door, and yonder is a livery servant with a portmanteau in his hand; some lord coming to lodge with me, perhaps.

WASP.

Be sure, my dear friend, you recommend me to him as soon as possible.

SCENE II.

LORD MONTROSS, FABRICE, WASP.

MONTROSS.

You, sir, I suppose, are Mr. Fabrice.

FABRICE.

At your service, sir.

MONTROSS.

I shall stay here only a few days. (Protect me, heaven, unhappy as I am!) I am recommended to you, sir, as a worthy honest man.

FABRICE.

So, sir, we ought all to be. You will here, sir, I believe, meet with all the conveniences of life; a tolerably good apartment, and my own table, if you choose to do me the honor to dine at it, and the amusement of coffee-house conversation.

MONTROSS.

Have you many boarders with you at present?

FABRICE.

Only one young lady, sir, very handsome and extremely virtuous.

WASP.

O mighty virtuous, ha! ha!

FABRICE.

Who lives quite retired.

MONTROSS.

Beauty and youth are not for me. Let me have an apartment, sir, if possible, entirely to myself. (What do I feel!) Have you any remarkable news in London?

FABRICE.

This gentleman, sir, can inform you: he talks and writes more than any one man in England, and is extremely useful to foreigners.

MONTROSS.

[*Walking about.*

I have other business.

FABRICE.

I'll step out, sir, and get things ready for you.

[*Exit.*

WASP.

[*Aside.*

This gentleman, I suppose, is just arrived in England: he must be some great man, for he seems to care for nobody. [*Turning to Montross.*] Permit me, my lord, to present to your lordship my respects; my pen and self, my lord, are at your lordship's service.

MONTROSS.

I am no lord, sir: to boast of a title, if we have one, is the part of a fool; and to assume one when we have no right, that of a knave. I am what I am; but pray, sir, what may be your employment in this house?

WASP.

I don't belong to the house, sir; but I spend most of my time in the coffee-room; write news, politics, and so forth, and am always ready to do an honest gentleman service. If you have any friend you want to have praised, or any enemy to be abused; any author you want to protect or to decry; 'tis but one guinea *per* paragraph: if you are desirous of cultivating any acquaintance for profit or pleasure, sir, I am your man.

MONTROSS.

And have you no other business, friend?

WASP.

O sir, it is a very good one, I assure you.

MONTROSS.

And have you never been shown in public with a pretty iron collar about your neck?

WASP.

This fellow has no notion of literature.

SCENE III.

WASP.

[*Sitting down to the table*] *several people walking about the coffee-house; Montross comes forward.*

MONTROSS.

Will my misfortunes never have an end? proscribed, banished, condemned to lose my head in Scotland; in my dear native country: I have lost my honors, my wife, my son, my whole family; except one unhappy daughter, like myself a miserable wanderer, perhaps dishonored; and must I die without taking revenge on Murray's barbarous family? I am razed out of the book of life; I am no more; even my name is wrested from me by that cruel decree: I am but a poor departed ghost, that hovers round its tomb.

[*One of the gentlemen in the coffee-house slapping Wasp on the shoulder.*

Well! you saw the new piece yesterday, it met with great applause; the author is a young fellow of merit, but has no fortune, the public ought to encourage him.

ANOTHER.

Rot the new piece; public affairs are strangely carried on; stocks rise; the nation's rich, and I'm ruined, absolutely undone.

WASP.

[*Writing.*

The piece is good for nothing; the author's a fool, and so are all those that support him: public affairs are in a wretched condition: the nation's ruined: I shall prove it in my pamphlet.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN.

Your pamphlet's nonsense: philosophy is the most dangerous thing in the world; it was that which lost us the island of Minorca.

MONTROSS.

[*At a distance from them.*

Lord Murray's son shall pay dearly for it. O that before I die I could avenge the father's injuries in the son's blood!

A GENTLEMAN.

I thought the comedy last night was an excellent one.

WASP.

Detestable: our taste grows worse and worse.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN.

Not so bad as your criticisms.

ANOTHER.

Philosophers sink the public funds: we must send another ambassador to Porte.

WASP.

We should always hiss a successful piece, for fear anything good should appear.

[*Four of them talk at once.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

If there was nothing good, you would lose all the pleasure of satirizing it: now I think the fifth act has great beauties.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I can't sell any of my goods.

THIRD GENTLEMAN.

I am in pain for Jamaica this year: depend on't, these philosophers will make us lose it.

WASP.

The fourth and fifth acts are both contemptible.

MONTROSS.

What a riot is here.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

It is impossible the government can exist as it is.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

If the price of Barbadoes water is not lowered, the nation's undone.

MONTROSS.

How happens it, that in every country when men meet they all talk together, though they are certain of not being heard or attended to!

ENTER FABRICE.

[*A napkin in his hand.*

Dinner's on the table, gentlemen; but pray, let us have no disputes there, if you mean to dine with

me any more. Sir, [*Turning to Montross.*] shall we have the honor of your company?

MONTROSS.

What, with this tribe? no, friend, let me have something in my own room. Hark'ee, sir, [*Whispering to him.*] Is my Lord Falbridge in London?

FABRICE.

No, sir, but I believe he will be here soon.

MONTROSS.

Does he come to your house sometimes? I think I have heard so.

FABRICE.

He has done me that honor.—

MONTROSS.

Very well. Good morrow to you.—How hateful is life to me!

[*Exit.*

FABRICE.

This man seems lost in grief and thought; I should not be surprised to hear he had made away with himself; 'twould concern me, for he has the appearance of a worthy gentleman.

[*The gentlemen leave the coffee-house, and go to dinner: Wasp continues at the table writing: Fabrice knocks at Mrs. Lindon's door.*

SCENE IV.

FABRICE, POLLY, WASP.

FABRICE.

Mrs. Polly, Mrs. Polly.

POLLY.

Who's there, my landlord?

FABRICE.

Will you be so obliging as to favor us with your company to dinner?

POLLY.

I dare not, my mistress eats nothing. How indeed should we eat! we have too much grief.

FABRICE.

O it will give you spirits, and make you cheerful.

POLLY.

I can't be cheerful: when my mistress suffers, I must suffer with her.

FABRICE.

Then I'll send you up something privately.

[*Exit.*

WASP.

[*Rising from the table.*

I'll follow you, Mr. Fabrice—well, and so, my dear Polly, you will not introduce me to your mistress—still inflexible?

POLLY.

'Tis a fine thing for you to pretend to make love to a woman of her condition.

WASP.

Pray what is her condition?

POLLY.

A respectable one, I assure you, sir. I should think a servant was good enough for you.

WASP.

That is to say, if I were to court you, you would be thankful.

POLLY.

Not I, indeed.

WASP.

And what, pray, is the reason why your mistress positively refuses to see me, and her waiting-maid treats me so contemptuously?

POLLY.

We have three reasons for it. First, you are a wit; secondly, you are very tiresome; and thirdly, you are a wicked fellow.

WASP.

And what right has your mistress, pray, who is kept here on charity, to despise me?

POLLY.

Upon charity? who told you so, sir? my mistress, sir, is very rich: if she is not expensive, it is because she hates pomp: she is plainly clad, out of modesty, and eats little, because temperance is prescribed to her: in short, sir, you are very impertinent.

WASP.

Don't let her give herself so many airs; we know her conduct, her birth, and her adventures.

POLLY.

You, sir, who told them you? what do you know?

WASP.

O, I have correspondents in every part of the world.

POLLY.

[*Aside.*

O heaven! this man will ruin us.

[*Turning to him.*

Mr. Wasp, my dear Mr. Wasp, if you know anything, don't betray us.

WASP.

O ho! there is something then, and now I am dear Mr. Wasp: well, well, I shall say nothing, but you must——

POLLY.

What?

WASP.

You must love me.

POLLY.

Fie, fie, sir, that's impossible.

WASP.

Either love or fear me. You know there is something—

POLLY.

There is nothing, sir, but that my mistress is as respectable as you are hateful. We are truly easy. We fear nothing, and only laugh at you.

WASP.

They are very easy: from that I conclude they are almost starved: they fear nothing, that is to say, they are afraid of being discovered—I shall get to the bottom of it by and by, or—I shall not. I'll be revenged on them for their insolence. Despise me!

SCENE V.

MISS LINDON [*Coming out of her chamber dressed very plainly.*

MISS LINDON, POLLY.

MISS LINDON.

O my dear Polly, you have been with that vile fellow, Wasp; he always makes me uneasy; a destestable character, whose pen, words, and actions are all equally abominable: they tell me he works himself into families to bring in misery where there is none, and to increase it where it is: I had left this house because he frequents it, long since, but for the honesty and good heart of our landlord.

POLLY.

He absolutely insisted on seeing you, and I would not let him.

MISS LINDON.

To see me! where is my Lord Murray, he has not been here these two days!

POLLY.

True, madam, but because he does not come, are we never to dine?

MISS LINDON.

Remember, Polly, to conceal my misery from him, and from all the world: I am content to live on bread and water: poverty is not intolerable, but contempt is: I am satisfied to be in want, but I would not have it known I am so.

POLLY.

Alas! my dear mistress, whoever looks at me will easily perceive it: with you it is a different thing; your nobleness of soul supports you, you seem to rejoice in calamities, and only look the handsomer for it: but I grow thinner and thinner, you may see me fall away every minute; I am so altered within this last year that I scarcely know myself.

MISS LINDON.

We must not part with our courage nor our hopes: I can support my own poverty, but yours indeed affects me. My dear girl, let the labor of my hands relieve you, we will have no obligations to anybody. Go and sell this embroidery which I have done lately. I think I succeed pretty well in this kind of work. You have assisted me, and in return my hands shall feed and clothe you: It is noble to owe our subsistence to nothing but our virtue.

POLLY.

Let me kiss, let me bathe with my tears the dear hands that have labored in my service. O! I had rather die with my dear mistress in poverty, than be servant to a queen. Would I could administer some comfort to you!

MISS LINDON.

Alas! Lord Murray is not come: he whom I ought to hate, the son of him who was the author of

all my misfortunes: alas! the name of Murray will be forever fatal to me: if he comes, as he certainly will, let him not know my country, my condition, or my misfortunes.

POLLY.

Do you know, that villain, Wasp, pretends to be well acquainted with him?

MISS LINDON.

How is it possible he should know anything of him, when even you are scarcely acquainted with him? Nobody writes to me, I am locked up in my chamber as closely as if I were in my grave: he only pretends to know something in order to make himself necessary: take care he does not so much as find out the place of my birth. You know, my dear Polly, I am an unfortunate woman whose father was banished in the late troubles, and whose family is ruined: my father is wandering from desert to desert in Scotland. I should have left London to join him in his misfortunes, but that I have still some hopes in Lord Falbridge; he was my father's friend: our true friends never desert us. He has returned from Spain, and is now at Windsor: I wait but to see him: but alas! Murray comes not. I have opened my heart to thee, remember the most fatal blow thou canst give to it would be the disclosure of my condition.

POLLY.

To whom should I disclose it; I never go from you; besides that, the world is very indifferent about the poor and unfortunate.

MISS LINDON.

The world is indifferent, Polly, in this respect;

but still it is always inquisitive, and loves to tear open the wounds of the wretched: besides that, the men assume a right over our sex when they are unhappy, and abuse their power. I would make even my miseries respectable: but alas! Lord Murray will not come.

SCENE VI.

MISS LINDON, POLLY, FABRICE.

FABRICE.

Forgive me, madam, I am not acquainted with your name or quality; but I have, I know not why, the greatest respect for you. I have left the company below to wait on you, and know your commands.

MISS LINDON.

The regard which you express for me, my dear sir, deserves my most grateful acknowledgments: but what are your commands with me?

FABRICE.

I came, madam, only to know yours: you had no dinner yesterday.

MISS LINDON.

I was sick, sir, and could not eat.

FABRICE.

You are worse than sick, madam, you are melancholy: you will pardon me, but I cannot help thinking your fortune is not equal to your person and appearance.

MISS LINDON.

Why should you think so? I never complained of my fortune.

FABRICE.

Notwithstanding that, madam, I am sure it is not what you could wish it were.

MISS LINDON.

What say you?

FABRICE.

I say, madam, that the world you seem to shun, admires and pities you. I am but a plain man, madam, but I can see all your merit as well as the finest courtier. Let me entreat you, my dear lady, to take a little refreshment: there is above stairs an elderly gentleman who would be glad to eat with you.

MISS LINDON.

What, sit down to table with a stranger!

FABRICE.

The gentleman, I am sure, would be agreeable to you: you seem afflicted, and so does he. The communication of your grief might, perhaps, give mutual consolation.

MISS LINDON.

I cannot, will not, see anybody.

FABRICE.

At least, madam, permit my wife to pay her respects to you, and keep you company: permit her—

MISS LINDON.

I return you thanks, sir, but I want nothing.

FABRICE.

You will pardon me, madam, but I cannot think you want nothing, when you stand in need even of common necessaries.

MISS LINDON.

Who could make you believe so? indeed, sir, you are imposed upon.

FABRICE.

You will forgive me, madam.

MISS LINDON.

O Polly, 'tis two o'clock, and Lord Murray not come yet!

FABRICE.

That lord you speak of, madam, is one of the best of men; you never received him here but before company. Why would not you permit me to furnish out a little repast for you both? he is, perhaps, a relative of yours.

MISS LINDON.

My dear sir, you are mistaken.

FABRICE.

[*Pulling Polly by the sleeve.*

Go, child, there is a good dinner for you in the next room. This woman is incomprehensible: but who is yonder lady in the coffee-room with a masculine air? I should have taken her for a man: how wildly she looks!

POLLY.

O my dear mistress! 'tis Lady Alton, who wanted to marry my lord—I remember I saw her once before this way: 'tis certainly she.

MISS LINDON.

And my lord not come! then I am undone. Why am I still condemned to live?

[*She goes in.*

SCENE VII.

LADY ALTON.

[*Walking across the stage in a violent passion, and taking Fabrice by the arm.*

Follow me, sir, I must talk with you.

FABRICE.

With me, madam?

LADY ALTON.

With you, wretch.

FABRICE.

What a devil of a woman!

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

LADY ALTON, FABRICE.

LADY ALTON.

I don't believe a word you say, Mr. Coffeeman; you will absolutely drive me out of my senses.

FABRICE.

Then pray, madam, get into them again.

LADY ALTON.

You have the impudence to affirm to me, that this fortune-hunter here is a woman of honor, though she has received visits from a nobleman. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

FABRICE.

Why so, madam? when my lord came, he never came in privately; she received him publicly, the doors of her apartment were open, and my wife present. You may despise my condition, madam, but you should respect my honesty; and as to the lady you are pleased to call a fortune-hunter, if you knew her, you would esteem her.

LADY ALTON.

Leave me, sir, you grow impertinent.

FABRICE.

What a woman!

LADY ALTON.

[*Goes to Miss Lindon's door, and knocks rudely.*
Open the door.

SCENE II.

MISS LINDON, LADY ALTON.

MISS LINDON.

Who knocks so? what do you want, madam?

LADY ALTON.

Answer me, madam. Does not Lord Murray come here sometimes?

MISS LINDON.

What's that to you? what right have you to ask me? am I a criminal, and you my judge?

LADY ALTON.

I am your accuser. If my lord still visits you, if you encourage that wretch's passion, tremble: renounce him, or you are undone.

MISS LINDON.

If I had a passion for him, your menaces, madam, would but increase it.

LADY ALTON.

I see you love him; that the perfidious villain has seduced you; he has deceived you, and you brave me: but know, there is no vengeance which I am not capable of executing.

MISS LINDON.

Then, madam, know, I do love him.

LADY ALTON.

Before I revenge myself I will astonish you. There, know the traitor, look at these letters he wrote to me: there is his picture too which he gave me; but let me have it back, or—

MISS LINDON.

[*Giving her back the picture.*

What have I seen? unhappy woman! madam—

LADY ALTON.

Well.

MISS LINDON.

I no longer love him.

LADY ALTON.

Keep your resolution and your promise; know, he is inconstant, cruel, proud, the worst of characters.

MISS LINDON.

Stop, madam; if you continue to speak ill of him, I may relapse, and love him again. You are come here on purpose to take away my wretched life: that, madam, will easily be done.—Polly, 'tis all over; come and assist me to conceal this last and worst of all my miseries.

POLLY.

What is the matter, my dear mistress, where is your courage?

MISS LINDON.

Against misfortune, injustice, and poverty, there are arms that will defend a noble heart; but there is an arrow that always must be fatal.

[*They go out.*

SCENE III.

LADY ALTON, WASP.

LADY ALTON.

To be betrayed, abandoned for this worthless little wretch.

[*To Wasp.*

You, news-writer, have you done what I ordered you? have you employed your engines of intelligence, and found out who this insolent creature is that makes me so completely miserable?

WASP.

I have fulfilled your ladyship's commands, and have discovered that she is a Scotchwoman, and hides herself from the world.

LADY ALTON.

Prodigious news indeed!

WASP.

I can find out nothing else at present.

LADY ALTON.

What service then have you been of?

WASP.

When we discover a little, we add a little; and one little joined to another, makes a great deal. There's a hypothesis for you.

LADY ALTON.

How, pedant, a hypothesis!

WASP.

Yes, I suppose she is an enemy to the government.

LADY ALTON.

Certainly, nothing can be worse inclined; for she has robbed me of my lover.

WASP.

You plainly see, therefore, that in troublesome times, a Scotchwoman, who conceals herself, must be an enemy to the state.

LADY ALTON.

I can't say I see it altogether so clearly, but I heartily wish it were so.

WASP.

I would not lay a wager about it, but I'd swear to it.

LADY ALTON.

And would you venture to affirm this before people of consequence?

WASP.

I have the honor of being related to many persons of the first fashion. I am intimate with the mistress of a valet de chambre to the first secretary of the prime minister: I could even talk with the lackeys of your lover, Lord Murray, and tell them that the father of this young girl has sent her up to London, as a woman ill disposed. Now observe, this might have its consequences, and your rival, for her bad intentions, might be sent to the same prison where I have so often been for my writings.

LADY ALTON.

Good, very good: violent passions must be served by people who have no scruples about them. Let the vessel go with a full sail, or let it go to the bottom. You are certainly right; a Scotchwoman who conceals herself at a time when all the people of her country are suspected, must certainly be an enemy to the state. You are no fool, as you have been represented to me. I thought you had been only a smatterer on paper, but I see you have genius. I have already done something for you; I will do a great deal more. You must let me know everything that passes here.

WASP.

Let me advise you, madam, to make use of everything you know, and of everything you do not know.

Truth stands in need of some ornament: downright lies indeed may be vile things, but fiction is beautiful. What after all is truth? a conformity with our own ideas; what one says is always conformable to the idea one has whilst one is talking; therefore, properly speaking, there is no such thing as a lie.

LADY ALTON.

You seem to be an excellent logician, I fancy you studied at St. Omer's. But go, only tell me whatever you discover, I ask no more of you.

SCENE IV.

LADY ALTON, FABRICE.

LADY ALTON.

This is certainly one of the vilest and most impudent scoundrels; dogs bite from an instinct of courage, and this fellow from an instinct of meanness. Methinks, now I am a little cool, his behavior makes me out of love with revenge. I could almost take my rival's part against him. She has in her low condition a pride that pleases me; she is decent, and I am told, sensible: but she has robbed me of my lover, and that I can never pardon. [*To Fabrice, whom she sees in the coffee-room.*] Honest man, your servant, you are a good kind of fellow, but you have got a sad rascal in your house.

FABRICE.

I have heard, madam, from many, that he is as wicked as Miss Lindon is virtuous and amiable.

LADY ALTON.

Amiable! that wounds my heart.

SCENE V.

FABRICE, MR. FREEPORT.

[*Dressed plainly, with a large hat.*

FABRICE.

Heaven be praised, Mr. Freeport, I see you safe returned; how are you since your voyage to Jamaica?

FREEPORT.

Pretty well, I thank you, Mr. Fabrice, I have been very successful, but am much fatigued. [*To the waiter.*] Boy, some chocolate and the papers—one finds it more difficult to amuse oneself than to get rich.

FABRICE.

Will you have Wasp's papers?

FREEPORT.

No: what should I do with such stuff? It is no concern of mine if a spider in the corner of a wall walks over his web to suck the blood of flies. Give me the *Gazette!* What public news have you?

FABRICE.

None at present.

FREEPORT.

So much the better; the less news the less folly. But how go your affairs, my friend? have you a good deal of business? who lodges with you now?

FABRICE.

This morning an old gentleman came who won't see anybody.

FREEPORT.

He's in the right of it: three parts of the world are good for nothing, either knaves or fools, and as for the fourth, they keep to themselves.

FABRICE.

This gentleman has not so much as the curiosity to see a charming young lady who is in the same house with him.

FREEPORT.

There he's wrong. Who is she, pray?

FABRICE.

She is something more singular even than himself: she has now been with me these four months, and has never stirred out of her apartment: she calls herself Lindon, but I believe that is not her real name.

FREEPORT.

I make no doubt but she's a woman of virtue, or she would not lodge with you.

FABRICE.

O she is more than you can conceive; beautiful to the last degree, greatly distressed, and the best of women. Between you and me she is excessively poor, but of a high spirit and very proud.

FREEPORT.

If that be the case she is more to blame even than your old gentleman.

FABRICE.

By no means: her pride is an additional virtue. She denies herself common necessaries, and at the

same time would let nobody know she does: works with her own hands to get money to pay me; never complains, but hides her tears: it is with the utmost difficulty I can persuade her to expend a little of her money, due for rent, on things she really wants; and am forced to make use of a thousand arts before she will suffer me to assist her. I always reckon what she has at half the price it cost me, and when she finds it out, there is always a quarrel between us, which indeed is the only quarrel we have ever had: in short, sir, she is a miracle of virtue, misfortune, and intrepidity: she frequently draws from me tears of tenderness and admiration.

FREEPORT.

You are naturally tender; I am not. I admire none, though I esteem many: but I will see this woman; I am a little melancholy, and she may divert me.

FABRICE.

O sir, she scarcely ever receives any visitors. There is a lord indeed who comes now and then to see her, but she will never speak to him unless before my wife. He has not been here for some time, and now she lives more retired than ever.

FREEPORT.

I love retirement too, and hate a crowd as much as she can: I must see her, where is her apartment?

FABRICE.

Yonder: even with the coffee-room.

FREEPORT.

I'll go in.

FABRICE.

You must not.

FREEPORT.

I say I must: why not go into her chamber? bring in my chocolate and the papers. [*Pulls out his watch.*] I have not much time to lose, for I am engaged at two.

SCENE VI.

MISS LINDON, [*frightened, Polly following her.*]

FREEPORT, FABRICE.

MISS LINDON.

My God! who is this? sir, you are extremely rude; I think you might have shown more respect to my sex than thus to intrude on my retirement.

FREEPORT.

You will pardon me, madam, [*To Fabrice*] bring me the chocolate.

FABRICE.

Yes, sir, with the lady's consent.

FREEPORT.

[*Seats himself near a table, reads the newspaper, and looks up to Miss Lindon and Polly, takes off his hat, and puts it on again.*

POLLY.

This gentleman seems pretty familiar.

FREEPORT.

Why won't you sit down, madam? you see I do.

MISS LINDON.

Which I think, sir, you ought not to do. I am astonished, sir: I never receive visits from strangers.

FREEPORT.

A stranger, madam! I am very well known; my name's Freeport, a merchant, and rich: inquire of me on 'Change.

MISS LINDON.

Sir, I know nobody in this country, I should be obliged to you if you would not intrude on a person to whom you are an utter stranger, and to whom as a woman you should have shown more respect.

FREEPORT.

I don't mean to incommode you, madam: be at your ease, as I am at mine; you see I am reading the news, take up your tapestry, or drink chocolate with me, or without me, just as you please.

POLLY.

This is an original!

MISS LINDON.

Good heaven! what a visit! and my lord not come. This whimsical fellow distracts me, and I don't know how to get rid of him. How could Fabrice let him in! I must sit down.

[*She sits down, and works, chocolate is brought in; Freeport takes a dish without offering her any; he sips, and talks by turns.*

FREEPORT.

Hark'ee, madam, I hate compliments, I have heard one of the best of characters of you: you are

poor and virtuous, but they tell me you are proud; that's a fault.

POLLY.

And pray, sir, who told you all this?

FREEPORT.

The master of this house, who is a very honest man, and therefore I believe him.

MISS LINDON.

O sir, 'tis all a fable; he has deceived you; not indeed with regard to pride, which always accompanies true modesty; nor as to virtue, which is my first duty; but with regard to that poverty of which he suspects me. Those who want nothing can never be poor.

FREEPORT.

You don't stick to truth, which is even a worse fault than being proud: I know better, I know you are in want of everything, and sometimes deny yourself so much as a dinner.

POLLY.

That's by order of the doctor.

FREEPORT.

Hold your tongue, hussy, do you pretend to give yourself airs too?

POLLY.

What an original!

FREEPORT.

In a word, whether you are proud or not, is nothing to me. I have made a voyage to Jamaica that has brought me in five thousand pounds: now, you must know, it is a law with me, and ought to be

a law with every good Christian, always to give away a tenth part of what I get: it is a debt which I owe to the unfortunate. You are unhappy, though you won't acknowledge it. There's five hundred pounds for you: now, remember, you're paid: let me have no curtseys, no thanks, keep the money and the secret.

[*Throws down a large purse on the table.*

POLLY.

In faith this is more original still.

MISS LINDON.

[*Rising.*

I never was so astonished in my life—alas! how everything conspires to humble me! what generosity! and yet what an affront!

FREEPORT.

[*Reading the news and drinking his chocolate.*

This impertinent writer! a ridiculous fellow to talk such nonsense with an air of consequence—"The king is arrived: he makes a most noble figure, being extremely tall." The blockhead! what signifies it whether he is tall or short? could not he have told us the plain fact?

MISS LINDON.

[*Coming up to Freeport.*

Sir—

FREEPORT.

Well, madam—

MISS LINDON.

What you have done, sir, surprises me still more than what you said: but I cannot possibly accept the

money, as it may not, perhaps, ever be in my power to repay it.

FREEPORT.

Who talks of repaying it?

MISS LINDON.

I thank you, sir, for your goodness, from the bottom of my heart: you have my sincere acknowledgments, my admiration; I can no more.

POLLY.

You are more extraordinary than the gentleman himself. Surely, madam, in the condition you are in, deserted by all the world, you must have lost your senses to refuse an unexpected succor, thus offered you by one of the most generous, though whimsical and absurd men I ever met with.

FREEPORT.

What do you mean by that, madam! whimsical and absurd!

POLLY.

If you won't accept of it for your own sake, take it for mine. I have served you in your ill-fortune, and have some right to partake of the good: in short, sir, this is no time to dissemble, we are in the utmost distress; and if it had not been for our kind landlord, must have perished with cold and hunger. My mistress concealed her condition from all those who might have been of service to us: you became acquainted with it in spite of her: in spite of herself, therefore, oblige her to accept of that which heaven hath sent her by your generous hand.

MISS LINDON.

Dear Polly, you will ruin my honor.

POLLY.

You, my dear mistress, would ruin yourself by your folly.

MISS LINDON.

If you love me, consider my reputation. I shall die with shame.

FREEPORT.

[*Reading.*

What are these women prating about?

POLLY.

And if you love me, madam, don't oblige me to perish with hunger.

MISS LINDON.

O Polly, what think you my lord would say, if still he loves me? could he believe me capable of such meanness? I always pretended to him that I wanted nothing; and shall I receive a present from another, from a stranger?

POLLY.

Your pretence was wrong, and your refusal still more so: as to my lord, he'll say nothing about it, for he has deserted you.

MISS LINDON.

My dear Polly, by our sorrows I entreat you, do not let us disgrace ourselves: contrive in some way to excuse me to this strange man, who means well, though he is so rude and unpolished: tell him, when an unmarried woman accepts such presents, the world will always suspect she does it at the expense of her virtue.

FREEPORT.

[*Reading.*

What does she say?

POLLY.

[*Coming close to him.*

O sir, something mighty ridiculous; she talks of the suspicions of the world, and that an unmarried woman—

FREEPORT.

Is she unmarried then?

POLLY.

Yes, sir, and I too.

FREEPORT.

So much the better. So she says that an unmarried woman—

POLLY.

Cannot take a present from a man—

FREEPORT.

She does not know what she says. Why am I to be suspected of a dishonest purpose, because I do an honest action?

POLLY.

Do you hear him, madam?

MISS LINDON.

I hear, and I admire him, but am still resolved not to accept it: they would say I loved him; that villain. Wasp, would certainly report it, and I should be undone.

POLLY.

[*To Freeport.*

She is afraid, sir, you are in love with her.

FREEPORT.

In love with her! how can that be, when I know nothing of her? indeed, madam, you may make yourself easy on that head; and if perchance some years hence I should fall in love with you, and you with me, well and good; as you determine, I shall determine also; and if you think no more of it, I shall think no more of it; if you tell me I am disagreeable to you, you will soon be so to me; if you desire not to see me, you shall never see me again; and if you desire me to return, I will.

[*Pulls out his watch.*

So fare you well. I have a little business at present. Madam, your servant.

MISS LINDON.

Your servant, sir, you have my esteem and my gratitude; but take your money with you, and once more spare my blushes.

FREEPORT.

The woman's a fool.

MISS LINDON.

Mr. Fabrice, Mr. Fabrice, for heaven's sake come and assist me.

FABRICE.

[*Coming in a violent hurry.*

What's the matter, madam?

MISS LINDON.

[*Giving him the purse.*

Here, take this purse: the gentleman left it by mistake, give it him again, I charge you; assure him of my esteem, and remember I want no assistance from any one.

FABRICE.

[*Taking the purse.*

O Mr. Freeport, I know you by this generous action; but be assured this lady means to deceive you: she is really in want of this.

MISS LINDON.

'Tis false: and is 't you, Mr. Fabrice, who would betray me?

FABRICE.

I will obey you, madam.

[*Aside to Freeport.*

I will keep this money; it may be of service to her without her knowing it. My heart bleeds to see such virtue joined to such misfortunes.

FREEPORT.

I feel for her too, but she is too haughty: tell her it is not right to be proud. Adieu.

SCENE VII.

MISS LINDON, POLLY.

POLLY.

Well, madam, you have made a fine piece of work of it; heaven graciously offered you assistance, and you resolve to perish in indigence; I too must fall a sacrifice to your virtue, a virtue which is not without its alloy of vanity: that vanity, madam, will destroy us both.

MISS LINDON.

Death is all I have to wish for: Lord Murray no longer loves me; he has left me these three days;

he has loved my proud and cruel rival; perhaps, he loves her still. I was to blame to think of him, but 'tis a crime I shall not long be guilty of.

[*She sits down to write.*

POLLY.

She seems in despair, alas! she has but too much reason to be so; her condition is far worse than mine: a servant has always some resource, but a woman like her can have none.

MISS LINDON.

[*Folding up her letter.*

'Tis no great sacrifice. There, Polly, when I am no more, carry that letter to him—

POLLY.

What says my dear mistress?

MISS LINDON.

To him who is the cause of my death. I have recommended you to him, perhaps he may comply with my last request: go, Polly, [*embracing her*] and be assured, that amongst all my misfortunes, that of not being able to recompense you as you deserve, is not the least which this wretched heart has experienced.

POLLY.

O my dear mistress, I cannot refrain from tears, you harrow up my soul: what is your dreadful purpose? what means this letter? God forbid I should ever deliver it! [*she tears the letter.*] Alas! madam, why would not you open your heart to Lord Murray? perhaps your cold reserve has disgusted him.

MISS LINDON.

Perhaps so, indeed: my eyes are open now, I must have offended him: but how could I disclose my condition to the son of him who ruined my father and family?

POLLY.

How, madam! was it my lord's father who—

MISS LINDON.

Yes, it was he who persecuted my father, had him condemned to death, deprived us of our nobility, and took away everything from us: left as I am without father, mother, or fortune, I have nothing but my reputation and my fatal love. I ought to detest the son of Murray: misfortune, that still pursues me, brought me acquainted with him. I have loved him, and I ought to suffer for it.

POLLY.

O madam, you grow pale, your eyes are dim.

MISS LINDON.

May grief perform that office for me, which sword or poison—

POLLY.

Help here, Mr. Fabrice, help; my mistress faints.

FABRICE.

Help, help here! where are ye all, my wife, my servants, come down; tell the gentlemen above—help here—

[*Fabrice's wife, her maids, and Polly, carry off Miss Lindon into her chamber.*

MISS LINDON.

[*As she is going out.*

Why will ye bring me back to life again? let me die in peace.

SCENE VIII.

MONTROSS, FABRICE.

MONTROSS.

What's the matter, landlord?

FABRICE.

That beautiful young lady, sir, I told you of, fainted away just now: but it will be over soon.

MONTROSS.

O the mere effect of vapors in young girls; they are not dangerous: what service could I be of? why call me down for this? I thought the house must have been on fire.

FABRICE.

I had rather it were, than this sweet creature should be hurt. If Scotland has many such beauties as her, it must be a charming country.

MONTROSS.

Is she Scotch then?

FABRICE.

So it seems; though I knew it but to-day: our news-writer tells me so, and he knows everything.

MONTROSS.

And what's her name?

FABRICE.

She calls herself Lindon.

MONTROSS.

That's a name I'm not acquainted with. [*He walks about.*] The bare mention of my country rives my heart. Was ever man treated with such cruelty and injustice as I have been? Barbarous Murray, thou art dead; but thy son survives: I will have justice or revenge. O my dearest wife, my children, my daughter! I have lost all. This sword had long since ended all my cares, did not the hopes of sweet revenge force me still to bear the detestable load of life.

FABRICE.

[*Returning.*

Thank God! all is well again.

MONTROSS.

What sudden change has happened then?

FABRICE.

O, sir, she has recovered her senses, and is pretty well; looks still pale, but always beautiful.

MONTROSS.

O it's nothing. I must go out—I must run the hazard—I will.

[*Exit.*

FABRICE.

This man does not trouble himself much about young ladies that faint; but if he had seen Miss Lindon, he would not be so indifferent.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

LADY ALTON, ANDREW.

LADY ALTON.

Yes: since I can't see the villain at home, I'll see him here: he'll certainly come. This news-writer told me truth, and was in the right of it: a Scotch-woman concealed in these dangerous times! she must be in a conspiracy against the state; she shall be seized; the order is given; at least I am too sure she conspires against me: but here comes Andrew, my lord's servant; I will know the whole of my misfortune. Andrew, you have got a letter from my lord, have not you?

ANDREW.

Yes, madam.

LADY ALTON.

For me.

ANDREW.

No, madam.

LADY ALTON.

How? have not you brought me several from him?

ANDREW.

Yes, madam: but this is not for you; 'tis for a certain person whom he is most desperately in love with.

LADY ALTON.

Well, and was not he most desperately in love with me when he used to write to me?

ANDREW.

O no, madam, he loved you calmly and coldly; 'tis quite another thing here; he neither sleeps nor eats, runs about day and night, and does nothing but talk of his dear Lindon. O there's a great deal of difference, I assure you.

LADY ALTON.

Perfidious wretch! but no matter: I tell you that letter is for me: 'tis without a superscription, is not it?

ANDREW.

Yes, madam.

LADY ALTON.

Were not all the letters you brought me without a superscription too?

ANDREW.

Yes, madam; but this I know is for Miss Lindon.

LADY ALTON.

I tell you 'tis for me, and to prove it to you, here are ten guineas for you.

ANDREW.

Indeed, madam, I begin to think the letter was for you; I was certainly mistaken: but if after all it is not, I hope you will not betray me; you may say you found it at Miss Lindon's.

LADY ALTON.

O leave that to me.

ANDREW.

After all, where is the harm in giving a love letter designed for one woman to another? they are all

alike; and if Miss Lindon does not receive this letter, she may have twenty others. I have executed my commission, and made a pretty good hand of it too.

LADY ALTON.

[*Opens the letter, and reads.*

Now for it—"My dear, amiable, and truly virtuous Miss Lindon"—that's more than ever he said to me—" 'tis now two days, an age to me, since I had the happiness of seeing you: but I have denied myself that pleasure with the hopes of serving you. I know what you are, and what I owe you. I will change the face of your affairs, or perish in the attempt. My friends are zealous for you. Depend on me as on the most faithful of lovers, and one who will endeavor to prove himself worthy of your affection."

This is an absolute conspiracy; there can be no doubt of it: she is a Scotchwoman, and her family ill disposed to the government. Murray's father commanded in Scotland: his friends, he says, are zealous; he runs about day and night: 'tis certainly a conspiracy. Thank God, I am as zealous as he, and if she does not accept my offers, she shall be seized in an hour's time, before her vile lover comes to her assistance.

SCENE II.

LADY ALTON, MISS LINDON, POLLY.

LADY ALTON.

[*To Polly, who is passing from her mistress's apartment towards the coffee-room.*

You, madam, go immediately and tell your mis-

tress I must speak with her; she need not be afraid; I shall say nothing to her but what will be agreeable, and concerns her happiness: let her come immediately, immediately, do you hear? she need not be afraid, I say.

POLLY.

O madam, we are afraid of nothing; but your looks make me tremble.

LADY ALTON.

I'll see if I can't persuade this virtuous lady to do as I would have her: I'll make my proposals, however.

MISS LINDON.

[*Comes in trembling, supported by Polly.*

What are your commands with me, madam? are you come again only to insult me in my distress?

LADY ALTON.

No: I come to make you happy. I know you are worth nothing; I am rich; I now make you an offer of one of my seats on the borders of Scotland, with all the lands belonging to it; go and live there, you and your family, if you have any; but you must immediately quit my lord forever, nor must he know of your retreat as long as you live.

MISS LINDON.

Alas! madam, he has abandoned me: be not jealous of a poor unfortunate: in vain you offer me a retreat; I shall soon find one without you, an eternal one, in a place where I need not blush at my obligations to you.

LADY ALTON.

Rash woman, is this an answer for me?

MISS LINDON.

Rashness, madam, would ill suit with my condition; firmness and intrepidity will much better become it: my birth, madam, is as good as yours; my heart, perhaps, much better; and as to my fortune, it shall not depend on any one, much less on my rival.

[*Goes out.*

LADY ALTON.

[*Alone.*

It shall depend on me. I am sorry she reduces me to this extremity, and am ashamed to make use of this rascal, Wasp; but she obliges me to it. Faithless lover! unhappy passion! O! I am choked with rage.

SCENE III.

FREEPORT AND MONTROSS [*in the coffee-room, with Fabrice's wife, and servants putting things in order.*

FABRICE, LADY ALTON.

LADY ALTON.

[*To Fabrice.*

Mr. Fabrice, you see me here often; but 'tis your own fault.

FABRICE.

On the contrary, madam, we could wish—

LADY ALTON.

I am more concerned than you can be; but you shall see me again, I assure you.

[*She goes out.*

FABRICE.

So much the worse. What would she be at now? What a difference there is betwixt her and the beautiful patient Miss Lindon!

FREEPORT.

True; she is, as you say, beautiful and virtuous.

FABRICE.

I am sorry this gentleman never saw her; I am sure he would be greatly affected with her behavior.

MONTROSS.

[*Aside.*

Wretch that I am! I have other things to think of.

FREEPORT.

I am always either on'Change or at Jamaica; but one can't help liking now and then to see a fine woman: she is really a fine creature, a sweet behavior, a charming countenance, and has something noble in her air and demeanor.—I must see her again one day or other. 'Tis pity she's so proud.

MONTROSS.

My landlord here informs me you behaved to her in a most generous manner.

FREEPORT.

Who I? no. Would not you, or any man in my place, have done the same?

MONTROSS.

If I had been rich, and she had merit, I believe I might.

FREEPORT.

What is there in it then to be wondered at? [*He takes up the papers.*] Well, what news have we to-day? How's this? Lord Falbridge dead!

MONTROSS.

Falbridge dead! the only friend I had on earth, or from whom I could expect relief? O fortune, fortune, wilt thou ever persecute me?

FREEPORT.

Was he your friend? I am sorry for you.—"Edinburgh, April 14. Great search is being made after Lord Montross, condemned to lose his head about eleven years ago."

MONTROSS.

Just heaven! what do I hear? What's that, sir, Lord Montross condemned—

FREEPORT.

Yes, sir, Lord Montross; there, sir, read it yourself.

MONTROSS.

[*Looking on the paper.*

'Tis so indeed. [*Aside.*] I must get away as fast as I can; this place is too public: sure, earth and hell conspired together never heaped so many misfortunes on one man. [*To his servant.*] John, let my horses be saddled, perhaps I may be going towards evening—how bad news flies!

FREEPORT.

Bad news, why so? what signifies it whether Lord Montross is beheaded or not? everything passes away—to-day a head is cut off, to-morrow we have

it in the newspapers, and next day we talk no more of it. If this Miss Lindon was not so proud, I would go and ask her how she did; she is very handsome, and a very worthy creature.

SCENE IV.

To them a King's Messenger.

MESSENGER.

Is your name Fabrice, sir?

FABRICE.

Yes, sir, your commands with me?

MESSENGER.

You keep a coffee-house, and let lodgings?

FABRICE.

I do, sir.

MESSENGER.

You have a young Scotch lady in your house, named Lindon?

FABRICE.

I have, sir, and esteem it a great happiness.

FREEPORT.

A most beautiful and virtuous lady; everybody tells me so.

MESSENGER.

I come to seize her by order of the government; there's my warrant.

FABRICE.

Amazing! I shudder at the thought.

MONTROSS.

A young Scotchwoman seized on the very day of my arrival! O my unhappy family, my country, what will become of my unfortunate daughter! she is, perhaps, the victim of my misfortunes, languishing in poverty and a prison: why was she ever born?

FREEPORT.

I never heard of young girls being seized by order of the government: I am afraid, Mr. Messenger, you are a rascal.

FABRICE.

If she is a fortune-hunter, as Wasp said, it will ruin my house; I am undone: this court lady had some reasons I see plainly—and yet she must be good and virtuous.

MESSENGER.

Let's have none of your reasons, sir, to prison, or give bail, that's the rule.

FABRICE.

I'll give you bail, myself, my house, my goods, my person.

MESSENGER.

Your person's nothing; the house, perhaps, not your own—your goods, where are they? I must have money.

FABRICE.

Good Mr. Freeport, shall I give him the five hundred pounds which she so nobly refused, and which are still in my possession?

FREEPORT.

Ay, ay, I'll give five hundred, a thousand, two thousand; I'll be answerable for it, my name's Free-

port. I believe the girl's strictly virtuous; but she should not be so proud.

MESSENGER.

Come, sir, give us your bond.

FREEPORT.

With all my heart.

FABRICE.

'Tis not every one employs their money thus.

FREEPORT.

To spend it in doing good is putting it out to the best interest.

[*Freeport and the Messenger retire to the corner of the coffee-room to count out the money.*

SCENE V.

MONTROSS, FABRICE.

FABRICE.

You are astonished, sir, at Mr. Freeport; but 'tis his constant practice: happy are those whom he takes a fancy to! he is no complimenter, but does a man a service in less time than others spend in making protestations about it.

MONTROSS.

[*Aside.*

There are still in the world some noble souls—what will become of me?

FABRICE.

We must take care not to let the poor young lady know anything of the danger she has been in.

MONTROSS.

I must be gone this night.

FABRICE.

One should never tell people of their danger till it is past.

MONTROSS.

The only friend I had in London is dead: what should I do here?

FABRICE.

We should make her faint away a second time.

SCENE VI.

MONTROSS.

A young Scotchwoman is seized, a person who lives retired, and is suspected by the government. I don't know why, but this adventure throws me into deep reflections. Everything conspires to awaken the memory of my sorrows, my afflictions, my misfortunes, and my resentment.

SCENE VII.

MONTROSS.

[*Seeing Polly crossing the stage.*

One word with you, madam, are you that pretty amiable young lady, born in Scotland, who—

POLLY.

Yes, sir—I, I am tolerably young, and a Scotchwoman; and as to pretty they say I am not amiss.

MONTROSS.

Have you any news from your own country?

POLLY.

No, sir, I have left it a long time.

MONTROSS.

And what are your relations, pray?

POLLY.

My father was an excellent baker, as I have heard, and my mother waiting-maid to a woman of quality.

MONTROSS.

O, now I understand you. You, I suppose, are servant to that young lady I have heard so much of. I was mistaken.

POLLY.

O sir, you do me too much honor.

MONTROSS.

You know who your mistress is, I suppose?

POLLY.

Yes, sir, the sweetest and most amiable of her sex, and one too who has the most fortitude in affliction.

MONTROSS.

She is in distress then?

POLLY.

Yes, sir, and so am I: but I had rather serve her in affliction than be ever so happy.

MONTROSS.

But don't you know her family?

POLLY.

My mistress, sir, desires to remain unknown: she has no family: sir, why do you ask me these questions?

MONTROSS.

To remain unknown! say you? O heaven, if I could at last—but 'tis a vain imagination. Tell me, pray, how old is your mistress?

POLLY.

One may safely tell her age. She is just eighteen.

MONTROSS.

Eighteen! the very age of my dear Montross, my lovely infant, the only remaining hope of my unhappy family—eighteen sayest thou?

POLLY.

Yes, sir, and I am but two and twenty, there's no great difference between us. I see no reason why you should make so many reflections on her age.

MONTROSS.

Eighteen, and born in my country, desires to remain unknown! I cannot contain myself—by your permission I must see and talk to her immediately.

POLLY.

Telling him of a girl of eighteen has turned this old gentleman's brain.—You can't possibly see her at present, sir, she's in the greatest distress.

MONTROSS.

For that very reason I must see her.

POLLY.

O, sir, fresh griefs and calamities have torn her heart, and deprived her of her senses. She is not one of those I assure you, sire, who faint away for nothing; she is but just now come to herself, and the little rest she now enjoys is mixed with grief and bitterness. Have pity, sir, on her condition.

MONTROSS.

All you say but increases my desire. I am her countryman, and partake of her afflictions, perhaps I may be able to lessen them; permit me, I beg you, before I leave this place, to have an interview with her.

POLLY.

You affect me deeply, sir; stay here a few minutes. It is impossible a young lady, who has just fainted away, should be able to receive visits immediately. I'll go to her, and come back to you soon.

SCENE VIII.

MONTROSS, FABRICE.

FABRICE.

[*Pulling him by the sleeve.*

Sir, is there nobody near us?

MONTROSS.

With what impatience shall I wait for her return!

FABRICE.

Can nobody hear us?

MONTROSS.

I can never support this anxiety.

FABRICE.

They are in search of you, sir,—

MONTROSS.

Who, where, what?

FABRICE.

I say, sir, they are in search of you; I cannot help interesting myself in the safety of those who lodge in my house. I don't know who you are, sir, but I have been asked a thousand questions about you. They have surrounded the house, passing, and repassing, getting all the information they can. In short I shall not be surprised if in a little time they should pay you the same compliment as they did the young lady, who, it seems, is of the same country.

MONTROSS.

I must speak with her before I go.

FABRICE.

Take my advice, sir, and get away as fast as you can; our friend, Freeport, perhaps might not be in the humor to do as much for you as for a girl of eighteen.

MONTROSS.

Pardon me, but I know not where I am; I scarce heard you—what must I do, or where can I go? my dear sir, I cannot go without seeing her: let me talk to you a little in private: I must beg you some how or other to let me have an opportunity of seeing this young lady.

FABRICE.

I told you before, you would want to see her. I assure you nothing can be more beautiful, more virtuous, or more agreeable.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

FABRICE, WASP.

[*At a table in the coffee-room.*

FREEPORT [*Smoking a pipe.*

FABRICE.

I must be so free as to tell you, Mr. Wasp, if I may believe all that is said of you, you would do me a favor by never coming to my house again.

FREEPORT.

All that is said is generally false: what fly has stung you, Mr. Fabrice?

FABRICE.

You come, and write your papers here, Mr. Wasp; and my coffee-house will be looked on as a poison shop.

FREEPORT.

[*To Fabrice.*

This fellow seems to deserve what you say.

FABRICE.

[*To Wasp.*

They say you speak ill of all mankind.

FREEPORT.

Of all mankind! that's too much indeed.

FABRICE.

They begin even to say you are an informer, and a scoundrel, but I am loth to believe them.

FREEPORT.

[*To Wasp.*

Do you hear, sir? this is past raillery.

WASP.

I am an illustrious writer, sir, a man of taste.

FABRICE.

Taste or no taste, sir, I say you have done me an injury.

WASP.

So far from it, sir, that I have helped off your coffee, made it fashionable to come to your house, 'tis my reputation that has brought you custom.

FABRICE.

A fine reputation indeed! that of a spy, a bad author, and a worse man!

WASP.

Stop, Mr. Fabrice, if you please. You may attack my morals, but my works—I will never suffer that.

FABRICE.

Your writings, sir, are not worth my consideration; but you are suspected of a design against the amiable Miss Lindon.

FREEPORT.

If I thought so, I would drown the dog with my own hands.

FABRICE.

'Tis said, you accused her of being Scotch, and the honest gentleman too who lives above stairs.

WASP.

Well, and suppose I had, what harm is there in being of any particular country?

FABRICE.

'Tis moreover reported that you have had several conferences with the agents of a certain choleric lady who comes here, and with the servants of a noble lord, who used to frequent this house: that you tell tales, and blow up quarrels.

FREEPORT.

[*To Wasp.*

Are you really such a rogue? then shall I detest you.

FABRICE.

O thank God! here comes my lord, if I am not mistaken.

FREEPORT.

A lord, is it? then your humble servant, I hate a lord, as much as I do a bad writer.

FABRICE.

He's not like other lords, I assure you.

FREEPORT.

Like other lords or not, 'tis no matter. I never love to be disturbed, so fare you well. I don't know how it is, my friend, but I am always thinking of this young Scotchwoman—I'll come back presently —immediately. I want to talk seriously to her—your servant. This Scotchwoman is handsome, and

a good creature.—Adieu—[*returning*] tell her, I intend to serve her greatly.

SCENE II.

LORD MURRAY.

[*Pensive and in great agitation.*

WASP.

[*Bowing to him, of which he takes no notice.*

FABRICE.

[*At a distance from him.*

LORD MURRAY.

[*To Fabrice.*

I'm glad to see you, friend: how is that charming girl you have the pleasure to boast of as your lodger here?

FABRICE.

She has been very ill, sir, since she saw you: but I'm sure she will be better now.

LORD MURRAY.

Great God, thou protector of innocence, I implore thee for her; O deign to make me an instrument in doing justice to virtue, and sheltering the unfortunate from oppression! Thanks to thy goodness, and my own endeavors, I have hopes of success. Hark'ee, friend, I would talk a little with that man.

[*Pointing to Wasp.*

WASP.

[*To Fabrice.*

You see, sir, you were mistaken, and I have some credit still at court.

FABRICE.

[*Going out.*

That's not quite so clear.

LORD MURRAY.

[*To Wasp.*

Well, my friend—

WASP.

[*Bowing.*

Permit me, my lord, to dedicate a volume to your lordship—

LORD MURRAY.

No, sir, we are not talking about dedications: you are the person that informed my servants of the arrival of the old gentleman just come from Scotland; you described him, and made the same report to the minister of state.

WASP.

My lord, I only did my duty.

LORD MURRAY.

[*Giving him a purse.*

You have done me a service without knowing it: but I don't consider the intention. Some folks say you meant to hurt, and have done good: there's something for your service. But if ever from this time forward you so much as pronounce the name of that gentleman, or of Miss Lindon, I'll throw you out at window,—away, be gone, sir.

WASP.

My lord, I return you thanks; everybody abuses me, and gives me money; I am certainly a cleverer fellow than I thought I was.

SCENE III.

LORD MURRAY.

[*Alone.*

An old gentleman just arrived from Scotland; Miss Lindon born in the same country! alas! if it were possible to repair the cruel injuries my father did—if heaven would graciously permit—but I'll go in. [*To Polly, who comes out of Miss Lindon's apartment.*] Polly, were not you surprised at not seeing me for so long a time? two whole days! I should not have forgiven myself had I not been engaged in my dear Miss Lindon's service: the ministers of state were at Windsor, and I was obliged to follow them there. Heaven surely inspired thee, when thou toldst me, Polly, the secret of her birth.

POLLY.

I'm frightened yet, my mistress so often forbade me: were I to give her the least uneasiness I should die with grief. Alas! sir, your absence this very day threw her into a fainting fit, and I believe I should have fainted too, if I had not exerted all my strength to assist her.

LORD MURRAY.

There, Polly, there's something for the fainting fit you had like to have fallen into.

[*Gives her money.*

POLLY.

My lord, I thank you; I am not so high spirited as my mistress, who refuses to accept of anything; and pretends to be quite at her ease, when she is absolutely starving.

LORD MURRAY.

Good heaven! the daughter of Montross reduced to poverty! how guilty am I! but I will repair everything, her condition shall soon be changed: why would she so long conceal it from me?

POLLY.

'Tis the only thing in which she deceived you, or I believe ever will.

LORD MURRAY.

But let us go in, I long to throw myself at her feet.

POLLY.

O my lord, not yet; she is now with an old gentleman, a very old gentleman, who is her countryman, and they are saying such tender things.

LORD MURRAY.

Who is this old gentleman? methinks I am already interested in his favor.

POLLY.

I know nothing of him.

LORD MURRAY.

Would to God he were the person I wish him to be! and what did they say to each other?

POLLY.

They began to grow very serious, the gentleman seemed to wish me out of the room, and so I came away.

SCENE IV.

LADY ALTON, LORD MURRAY, POLLY.

LADY ALTON.

So, sir, at last I've caught you: thou base perfidious man, now sir, I am convinced of your inconstancy, and my own disgrace.

LORD MURRAY.

True, madam, you are so. [*Aside.*] what an unseasonable intrusion!

LADY ALTON.

Perfidious monster!

LORD MURRAY.

A monster I may appear in your eyes, and I am glad of it; but perfidious I never was; 'tis not my character: before I loved another, I frankly told you I had no longer any regard for you.

LADY ALTON.

After a promise of marriage, wretch, after so many protestations of love!

LORD MURRAY.

When I made those protestations I loved you, and when I promised to marry you, I meant to do so.

LADY ALTON.

And why then did not you keep your word? what prevented you?

LORD MURRAY.

Your character, your fiery temper and disposition: marriage was intended to make us happy, and I saw too plainly we were not made for each other.

LADY ALTON.

And so you have quitted me for a wandering lady errant, a poor fortune-hunter.

LORD MURRAY.

No, madam, I leave you for softness and goodnature, for every grace, and every virtue.

LADY ALTON.

But you are not yet possessed of her: know, traitor, I will be revenged, and speedily too.

LORD MURRAY.

I know your vindictive temper, know you have more envy than jealousy, more rage than tenderness, but you will be forced to honor and respect the woman I love.

LADY ALTON.

I know the object of your affection, sir, better than you do; know I who she is; I know too who that stranger is, who came hither yesterday: yes sir, I am acquainted with it all, and so are they who have more power and authority than Lord Murray: that unworthy rival, for whom I am despised, shall soon be seized and taken from you.

LORD MURRAY.

What says she, Polly? I'm terrified at the thought.

POLLY.

And so am I. We are undone, sir.

LORD MURRAY.

Stay, madam, explain yourself—hear me.

LADY ALTON.

I'll hear nothing, answer nothing, explain nothing: you are an inconstant, false-hearted, perfidious villain. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.

LORD MURRAY, POLLY.

LORD MURRAY.

What does this fury mean? her jealousy is terrible: heaven grant I never may be jealous! she talks of having my dear girl seized, and pretends to know this stranger. What would she be at?

POLLY.

To tell you the truth, my mistress has been taken up by order of the government, and I too, I believe; and if it had not been for an honest fat man, who is goodness itself, and who gave in bail for us, we had both been in prison at this very time. They had made me swear not to tell you anything of it: but how can I conceal it from you?

LORD MURRAY.

What do I hear? misfortune on misfortune! your mistress's very name I find is suspected. Alas! my family was born to be the destruction of hers: heaven, fortune, justice, and love would repair all, but guilt opposes me. It shall not, must not triumph; do not alarm my dear girl. I'll go myself to the ministry! Try everything, do everything to save

her. I'll deny myself the happiness of seeing her till I can assure her of success. I fly, Polly, to serve her, and will return immediately. Tell her I have left only because I adore her.

[*Going out.*

POLLY.

This is a strange adventure. I see this world is nothing but a perpetual contest between the virtuous and the wicked, and we poor girls are always the sufferers.

SCENE VI.

MONTROSS, MISS LINDON.

[*Nods to Polly, who goes out.*

MONTROSS.

Every word you utter pierces my soul: born in Lochaber! persecuted, oppressed, and deserted! a woman with such noble sentiments!

MISS LINDON.

Those sentiments, sir, perhaps are owing to my misfortunes: had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my soul, which is fortified by adversity, had been weak and vain.

MONTROSS.

O thou art worthy of a nobler fate. You acknowledge to me you are sprung from one of the proscribed families, whose blood was shed on a scaffold in our civil wars. But still you conceal from me your name and birth.

MISS LINDON.

Duty binds me to silence. My father himself was proscribed: they are even now in search of him, and were I to name perhaps I might destroy him. You inspire me, I own, with uncommon tenderness and respect, but I know you not, and I have everything to fear. You see I am myself suspected, and am a prisoner here. One word might ruin me.

MONTROSS.

One word perhaps might give me the greatest comfort: but tell me only what age you were of when you parted from your father, who was afterwards so unhappy?

MISS LINDON.

I was then but five years old.

MONTROSS.

Great God, have mercy on me! everything she says contributes to throw new light on my dark paths! O providence, do not withdraw thy goodness from me!

MISS LINDON.

You weep, sir, alas! nor can I help joining my tears with yours.

MONTROSS.

[*Wiping his eyes.*

Go on, I conjure you: after your father had quitted his family to see it no more, how long did you remain with your mother?

MISS LINDON.

I was ten years old when she died in my arms, oppressed with grief and misery, and after she had heard that my brother was killed in battle.

MONTROSS.

O, I faint; what a dreadful moment! O thou dear, unhappy wife, and thou more fortunate son, to die without seeing so much misery! do you remember this picture? [*Takes a picture out of his pocket.*

MISS LINDON.

What do I see? is this a dream? surely 'tis my mother's picture.

MONTROSS.

It is, it is your mother; and I am that unhappy father who is condemned to death, whose trembling arms now embrace thee.

MISS LINDON.

Do I live? where am I? O, sir, behold me at your knees: this is the first happy moment of my life: O, my father! alas! how darest you venture hither? I tremble for you, even whilst I am thus happy in your sight.

MONTROSS.

My dearest child, you know the misfortunes of our family; you know that the house of Murray, still jealous of ours, plunged us into these calamities. I have lost all: one friend alone remained, who by his interest and power might have restored me, and had promised it; but on my arrival here, I find that friend is dead, that I am searched after in Scotland, and a price put on my head. 'Tis, no doubt, the son of my old enemy who still persecutes me: I will die by his hand, or be revenged on him.

MISS LINDON.

And come you then with a resolution to kill Lord Murray?

MONTROSS.

Yes: I will avenge you and my family, or die. I only hazard a life already devoted to the scaffold.

MISS LINDON.

O fortune, in what new horrors dost thou involve me! what must I do? O my father!

MONTROSS.

My dearest daughter! how cruel is thy fate to be born of such a wretched father!

MISS LINDON.

O sir, I am much more unhappy than you think me: are you resolved on this fatal enterprise?

MONTROSS.

Ay, to death.

MISS LINDON.

O, my dear father, let me conjure you by that life which you gave me, by your misfortunes, by my own, which are, perhaps, still greater, do not expose me to the dread of losing you; have pity on me, spare your own life, and preserve mine.

MONTROSS.

Your voice reaches to my inmost soul: methinks I hear in thee, thy much-loved mother; speak, what would you?

MISS LINDON.

Do not expose your precious life, but quit this dangerous place, dangerous for us both: yes, I am resolved I will renounce all for my dear father's sake. I am ready to follow you, I will accompany you, sir, to some far distant island, and there these

hands shall labor to support you. It is my duty, and I will perform it: 'tis done, away.

MONTROSS.

I must not then avenge you?

MISS LINDON.

No, sir, that vengeance would destroy me: come, let us be gone.

MONTROSS.

Well, I submit. The father's love prevails over all: since you have the courage to accompany me, I will go: I will prepare everything for our departure from London within this hour: be ready: one more embrace, and farewell.

SCENE VII.

MISS LINDON, POLLY.

MISS LINDON.

'Tis all over, Polly: I shall never see Lord Murray again.

POLLY.

Indeed, madam, but you will; he'll be here in a few minutes: he is but just gone from hence.

MISS LINDON.

Gone from hence! and not see me; this is worse than all. O my unhappy father! why did we not go before?

POLLY.

If he had not been interrupted by that detestable Lady Alton.

MISS LINDON.

What! did he meet her here after all to insult me! after leaving me for three days without so much as writing! to affront me so grossly. O if my life were not necessary to my dear father, this moment would I part from it.

POLLY.

But hear me, madam, I swear to you my lord.—

MISS LINDON.

Perfidious wretch! but all men are so. O my poor father! hereafter I will think on none but thee.

POLLY.

On my soul, madam, you are wrong; my lord is not false or perfidious, but one of the best of men: he loves you from his soul, and has given me convincing proofs of it.

MISS LINDON.

Nature should be superior to love. I know not whither I am going, or what will become of me; but certainly I can never be more miserable than I am at present.

POLLY.

My dear mistress, you will hear nothing; recover your spirits a little: I tell you, you are beloved.

MISS LINDON.

O Polly, will you follow me?

POLLY.

To the end of the world, madam: but hear me; you are beloved, indeed you are.

"O POLLY, WILL YOU FOLLOW ME?"

MISS LINDON.

Let me alone; talk no more to me of my lord: alas! if he did love me, I must leave him—that gentleman you saw with me—

POLLY.

Well—

MISS LINDON.

Come in, and I'll tell you all: tears and sighs will not let me speak: follow me, and get everything ready for our departure.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE I.

MISS LINDON, FREEPORT, FABRICE.

FABRICE.

Polly, I find, is packing up your things; you are going to leave us: you can't imagine, madam, the concern it gives me.

MISS LINDON.

My dear landlord, and you, sir, to whom I am so much indebted for your unmerited generosity, I am sorry it is not in my power to return it; but be assured I shall never, whilst I have life, forget you.

FREEPORT.

What is all this, what is all this? if you like us, why do you leave us? you aren't afraid of anything are you? a girl, like you, can have nothing to fear.

FABRICE.

Mr. Freeport, the old gentleman, who it seems is her countryman, is going too. The lady wept, and he wept, at parting; and I am ready to weep too.

FREEPORT.

Ridiculous! I never wept in my life: our eyes were never given us for that purpose: I own I'm sorry. Though she is a little proud, as I told you, yet she is such a good creature, one can't help being concerned at losing her. If you go, madam, you must write to me; I shall always be glad to do you any service: perhaps we may meet again one day or other, who knows! but be sure you don't forget to write to me.

MISS LINDON.

I assure you, sir, I will; and if ever fortune—

FREEPORT.

Fabrice, I'm sure this woman is well-born. I shall expect a letter from you, but don't put too much wit into it.

FABRICE.

You will forgive me, madam, but I really don't think you are at liberty to go hence, as Mr. Freeport is bail for you, and must lose five hundred pounds if you leave us.

MISS LINDON.

O heaven! another distress! another humiliation! must I then remain here? and my lord——my father too.—

FREEPORT.

[*To Fabrice.*

O don't let that stop her—there is something in her that charms me—but let her go as soon as she

pleases: you don't suppose I value five hundred pounds. Hark'ee, Fabrice, put five hundred more into her portmanteau. I beg, madam, [*to Miss Lindon*] you will go whenever it is agreeable to you; write to me, and let me see you when you return; for I have really conceived a great esteem and affection for you.

SCENE II.

LORD MURRAY *and servants at one part of the stage,* MISS LINDON *and the rest at the other.*

LORD MURRAY.

[*To his servants.*

Stay you here: and do you run to the court of chancery, and bring me those parchments as soon as they are finished: go you and get things ready at my new house. [*Pulls a paper out of his pocket, and reads.*] What happiness it will be to make her happy!

MISS LINDON.

[*To Polly.*

O Polly, I am distracted at the sight of him.

FREEPORT.

This lord always comes in unseasonably: he is handsome and well-made, and yet I don't like him: but what's that to me? I have certainly some regard for her; but I am not in love with her.—Madam, your servant.

MISS LINDON.

I shall not go, sir, without paying my respects to you.

FREEPORT.

O pray, madam, no ceremony; perhaps it may affect me too much. Don't think I'm in love with you, madam; but I should be glad to see you once more before you go: I shall be in the house, and must see you set out. Go, Fabrice, and help the good gentleman above. I find I have a prodigious regard for this young lady.

SCENE III.

LORD MURRAY, MISS LINDON.

LORD MURRAY.

At length once more I am happy in the sight of all I hold dear on earth. What a house is this for Miss Lindon! but one more worthy of her is prepared: you look down and weep: for heaven's sake what has happened to you? who was that surly looking fellow talking with you? if he is the cause of your uneasiness, he shall soon repent it.

MISS LINDON.

Alas! my lord, he is one of the best of men; one who has taken pity on my misfortunes; who has never abandoned, never insulted me; one who never talked to my rival without deigning to look on me; one who, if he had loved me, would not have let three days pass without writing.

LORD MURRAY.

Believe me, when I tell you, I had rather die than merit the least of those cruel reproaches. I absented myself but for your sake, thought of nothing but you, and have served you in spite of yourself: if, on

my return here, I found that clamorous revengeful woman, could I help it? I went back again immediately to counteract her fatal designs. My God, not write to you!

MISS LINDON.

No.

LORD MURRAY.

I see she has intercepted my letters; her baseness increases, if possible, my passion; may it recall yours! how unkind was it in you to conceal from me your name and condition! a condition so unworthy of you.

MISS LINDON.

Who disclosed them to you?

LORD MURRAY.

[*Pointing to Polly.*

She, your confederate.

MISS LINDON.

Did you betray me?

POLLY.

You betrayed yourself, madam; I served you.

MISS LINDON.

You know me then; you know what hatred hath always divided our families: your father was the cause of mine being condemned to death; he reduced me to that wretched state which I endeavored to conceal from you; and you, his son, now dare avow a passion for me!

LORD MURRAY.

I do; I adore you; 'tis what I owe you: my love shall repair the injuries my father did: 'tis the jus-

tice of providence: my heart, my fortune, and my life, are at your disposal: let us unite these hostile names. Here is a contract of marriage; shall I hope to see it executed?

MISS LINDON.

Alas! my lord, it is impossible; I am going this moment to leave you forever.

LORD MURRAY.

Going? to leave me forever? sooner shall you behold me perish at your feet: am I at last rejected then?

POLLY.

I say, madam, you must not go; you are always making some desperate resolution: but I shall bring you to yourself again. My lord, you must second me.

LORD MURRAY.

Who could inspire you with this cruel design to fly from me, to render all my cares abortive?

MISS LINDON.

My father.

LORD MURRAY.

Your father? where is he? what does he mean to do with you? inform me quickly.

MISS LINDON.

He's here, and means to carry me away with him; it is resolved.

LORD MURRAY.

No: by thy dear self I swear, it must not, shall not be: where is he? conduct me to him.

MISS LINDON.

My dearest lord, take care; let him not see you: he is come hither to finish his misfortunes by taking away your life, and I have consented to fly with him to divert him from this dreadful resolution.

LORD MURRAY.

Yours is more cruel still; but be assured I fear him not, nay hope one day to make him my friend. —This fellow not returned yet! O heaven! how swift is every evil thing, how slow is every good!

MISS LINDON.

My father comes: if you love me, do not let him see you; spare him the horror of such an interview: for heaven's sake retire, at least for a while.

LORD MURRAY.

'Tis with the utmost regret that I submit; but you command, and I must obey. I will go in, and return with arms that shall make his drop out of his hand.

SCENE IV.

MONTROSS, MISS LINDON.

MONTROSS.

Come, my dear daughter, my only comfort and support, let us be gone.

MISS LINDON.

O thou unhappy father of a more unhappy daughter, never, never will I leave you; but permit me to stay here a little longer.

MONTROSS.

What! after your urgent entreaties that I would go immediately; after having promised to follow me to some desert solitude, where I may forget my disgrace! have you changed your design? have you so soon forgot the tender sentiments you so lately expressed?

MISS LINDON.

Indeed, sir, I am not changed: I am incapable of such baseness; I will follow you: but once more let me entreat you, stay a little while: grant but this favor to her who owes to you a life of sorrows; do not refuse me a few precious moments.

MONTROSS.

They are indeed precious, and yet you would lavish them away: consider we are every moment in danger of being discovered, that you have yourself been seized, that they are even now in search of me, and that to-morrow you may see your father given up to an ignominious death.

MISS LINDON.

Those words are as a clap of thunder to me. I submit, sir: I am ashamed to have stayed so long; but I had a distant hope—no matter; you are my father, and I'll follow you. O me!

SCENE V.

FREEPORT *and* FABRICE *on one side of the Stage,* MONTROSS *and his daughter on the other.*

FREEPORT. [*To Fabrice.*

Her servant has carried the portmanteau back to

her chamber: they'll not go yet; I'm glad of that, however. I began to have a sort of liking for her; not that I'm in love with her; but she is so well-bred, there is no parting from her without some uneasiness; a kind of anxiety that I never felt before: there's something very extraordinary in it.

MONTROSS.

[*To Freeport.*

Sir, your servant; we are just going to set out, with hearts full of gratitude to you for past favors: I assure you I never met with a worthier man than yourself: you almost reconcile me to mankind.

FREEPORT.

You are going then, sir, and this lady I suppose: I'm sorry for it: you should have staid a little longer; indeed you should. I have just now thought of something, that, perhaps, might not be disagreeable to you: pray, stay.

SCENE VI.

LORD MURRAY.

[*To them, taking a roll of parchment from his servant.*

'Tis well: thank heaven! I have at last got the pledge of my future happiness.

FREEPORT.

[*Aside.*

A plague on this lord, here he is again: I hate him for being so agreeable.

MONTROSS.

[*To his daughter, while Lord Murray is talking to his servant.*

Who is that man, my dear?

MISS LINDON.

It is, sir—it is—O heaven! have mercy on me!

FABRICE.

'Tis my Lord Murray, sir, one of the finest gentlemen in this kingdom, and the most generous.

MONTROSS.

Murray! O heaven! my fatal enemy, who comes to insult me, to triumph over my misfortunes [*draws his sword*] but he shall have my life, or I his.

MISS LINDON.

O stop, my father, what would you do?

MONTROSS.

Cruel daughter! and is it thus you have betrayed me?

FABRICE.

[*Stepping between them.*

No violence, I beg, sir, in my house; you will ruin me.

FREEPORT.

Why should you hinder people from fighting, if they have a mind to it?

LORD MURRAY.

[*At a distance from Montross.*

You are the father of that charming woman?

MISS LINDON.

O, I die.

MONTROSS.

I am, sir; I'll not deny it. Come then, thou cruel son of a still more cruel father, I know thy purpose; come, and take my life.

FABRICE.

Again, sir—

LORD MURRAY.

Stop him not: I have that which will disarm him.

[*Draws his sword.*

MISS LINDON.

[*Sinking into the arms of Polly.*

Cruel man! and dare you—

LORD MURRAY.

Yes, I dare—I am the son of your inveterate foe; and thus [*throwing away his sword*] I attack you.

FREEPORT.

Here's another for you, sir.

LORD MURRAY.

Now, sir, with one hand strike this guilty breast, and with the other receive this paper—read, and know me.

MONTROSS.

What do I see? my pardon signed, my honors restored, my family re-established! O heaven! and is it to you, to Lord Murray, I owe it all. O! my friend, my benefactor, now you triumph more, much more, than if I had fallen by your sword.

MISS LINDON.

O unexpected happiness! my lover then is worthy of me.

LORD MURRAY.

O my father, permit me to embrace you.

MONTROSS.

How shall I repay such generosity?

LORD MURRAY.

[*Pointing to Miss Lindon.*

There, sir, is my reward.

MONTROSS.

The father and the daughter are both yours forever.

FREEPORT.

[*To Fabrice.*

My friend, I was afraid this lady was not made for me: however, she is fallen into good hands, and I am satisfied.

End of the Fifth and Last Act.

NANINE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Count d'OLBAN, a nobleman retired into the country.

The Baroness de l'ORME, a relation of the Count's, a haughty, imperious woman, of a bad temper, and disagreeable to live with.

The Marchioness d'OLBAN, mother of the Count.

NANINE, a young girl, brought up in the Count's house.

PHILIP HOMBERT, a peasant in the neighborhood.

BLAISE, the gardener.

GERMON, MARIN, } Servants.

SCENE, the Count d'OLBAN'S country seat.

This Comedy is called in the French *Nanine, ou le Préjugé Vaincu* (Nanine, or Prejudice Overcome). It is written, as we are told in the title-page, in verses of ten syllables. The absurdity of comedies in rhyme I have already remarked. The original begins thus:

> Il faut parler, il faut, Monsieur le *Comte,*
> Vous expliquer nettement sur mon *Compte.*

The reader cannot but observe, what villainous rhymes *Comte* and *Compte* are, and perhaps will more readily forgive my reducing this comedy into plain prose. It was produced in 1749.

NANINE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

THE COUNT D'OLBAN, THE BARONESS DE L'ORME.

BARONESS.

In short, my lord, it is time to come to an explanation with regard to this affair; we are no children; therefore, let us talk freely: you have been a widower for these two years past, and I, a widow about as long: the lawsuit in which we were unfortunately engaged, and which gave us both so much uneasiness, is at an end; and all our animosities, I hope, now buried with those who were the causes of them.

COUNT.

I am glad of it; for lawsuits were always my aversion.

BARONESS.

And am not I as hateful as a lawsuit?

COUNT.

You, madam?

BARONESS.

Yes, I, sir: for these two years past we have lived together, with freedom, as relations and friends; the ties of blood, taste, and interest, seem to unite us, and to point out a more intimate connection.

COUNT.

Interest, madam? make use of some better term, I beseech you.

BARONESS.

That, sir, I cannot; but with grief I find, your inconstant heart no longer considers me in any other light than as your relative.

COUNT.

I do not wear the appearance, madam, of a trifler.

BARONESS.

You wear the appearance, sir, of a perjured villain.

COUNT.

[*Aside.*

Ha! what's this?

BARONESS.

Yes, sir: you know the suit my husband began against you, to recover my estate, was, by agreement, to have been terminated by a marriage; a marriage you told me, of choice; you are engaged to me, you know you are; and he who defers the execution of his promise seldom means to perform it.

COUNT.

You know, I wait for my mother's consent.

BARONESS.

A doting old woman: well, sir, and what then?

COUNT.

I love and respect her yet.

BARONESS.

But I do not, sir. Come, come, these are idle, frivolous excuses for your unpardonable falsehood: you wait not for her, or for anybody; perfidious, ungrateful man!

COUNT.

Who told you so, madam, and whence all this violence of passion? who told you so? whence comes your information, madam?

BARONESS.

Who told me? yourself, yourself. Your words, your manner, your air, your whole behavior, put on on purpose to affront me: it shocks me to see it: act in another manner, or find some better excuses for your conduct: can you think me blind to the shameful, unworthy passion that directs you, a passion for the lowest, meanest object? you have deceived me, sir, basely deceived me.

COUNT.

'Tis false, I cannot deceive; dissimulation is no part of my character. I own to you, there was a time when you were agreeable to me; I admired you, and flattered myself that I should have found in you a treasure to make amends for that which heaven had deprived me of; I hoped in this sweet asylum to have tasted the fruits of a peaceful and happy union: but you have found out the means to destroy your own power. Love, as I told you long since, has two quivers: one filled with darts, tipped with the purest flame, which inspires the soul with tender feelings, refines our taste and sentiments, enlivens our affection, and enhances our pleasures; the other is full of cruel arrows, that wound our hearts with quarrels, jealousy, and suspicion, bring on coldness and indifference, and remove the warmth of passion to make room for disgust and satiety: these, madam, are the darts which you have drawn forth, against us both, and yet you expect that I should love.

BARONESS.

There, indeed, I own myself in the wrong: I ought not to expect it: it is not in your power: but you are false, and now would reproach me for it. and I must suffer your insults, your fine similes and illustrations: but pray, sir, what is it I have done to lose this mighty treasure? what have you to find fault with?

COUNT.

Your temper, your humors, madam: beauty pleases the eye alone, softness and complacency charm the soul.

BARONESS.

And have not you your humors, too, sir?

COUNT.

Doubtless, madam; and, for that very reason, would have an indulgent wife; one whose sweet complying goodness would bend a little to my frailties, and condescend to reconcile me to myself, to heal my wounds without burning them, to correct without assuming, to govern without being a tyrant, to insinuate herself by degrees into my heart, as the light of a fine day opens gradually on the weak and delicate eye: he who feels the yoke that is put on him will always murmur at it; and tyrannic love is a deity that I abjure: I would be a lover, but not a slave: your pride, madam, would make me contemptible: I have faults, I own I have; but heaven made woman to correct the leaven of our souls, to soften our afflictions, sweeten our bad humors, soothe our passions, and make us better and happier beings: this was what they were designed for; and, for my part, I would prefer ugliness and affability to beauty with pride and arrogance.

BARONESS.

Excellently well moralized, indeed; and so when you insult, abuse, and betray me, I in return, with mean complacency, must forgive the shameful extravagance of your passion; and your assumed air of grandeur and magnanimity must be a sufficient excuse to me for all the baseness of your heart.

COUNT.

How, madam?

BARONESS.

Yes, sir: I know you: it is the young Nanine who has done me this injury; a child, a servant, a field beggar, whom my foolish tenderness nourished and supported; whom your fond, easy mother, touched with false pity, took up out of the bosom of penury and sorrow. O you blush, sir, do you?

COUNT.

I, madam? I wish her well.

BARONESS.

You love her, sir: I know you do.

COUNT.

Well, madam, and if I did love her, know, I would openly avow it.

BARONESS.

Nay, I believe you are capable of it.

COUNT.

I am so.

BARONESS.

And would you break thus through all the bounds of decency, degrade your rank, demean your birth,

and, plunged as you are in shame and infamy, laugh at and defy all honor?

COUNT.

Call it prejudice: whatever you, or the world may think, madam, I never mistake vanity for honor and glory: you love pomp and splendor, and place grandeur and nobility in a coat of arms: I look for it in the heart. The man of worth, who has modesty with courage, and the woman who has sense and spirit, though without fortune, rank, or title, are, in my eyes, the first of human kind.

BARONESS.

But surely they ought to have some rank and condition in life. Would you treat a low-born scholar, or an honest man of the meanest birth, because he had a little virtue, in the same manner and with the same respect as you would a lord?

COUNT.

The virtuous should always have the preference.

BARONESS.

This extravagant humility is insupportable: do we owe nothing then to our rank?

COUNT.

Yes: to be honest.

BARONESS.

My noble blood would aspire to a higher character.

COUNT.

That is a high one which defies the vulgar.

BARONESS.

Thus you degrade all quality.

COUNT.

No: thus I do honor to humanity.

BARONESS.

Ridiculous! what then becomes of the world? what is fashion?

COUNT.

Fashion, madam, is despised by wisdom: I will obey its ridiculous commands in my dress perhaps, but not in my sentiments: no: it becomes a man to act like a man, to preserve to himself his own taste and his own thoughts: am I ridiculously to ask of others what I am to seek, or to avoid, to praise, or condemn? must the world decide my fate? surely I have my reason, and that should be my guide: apes were made for imitation only, but man should act from his own heart.

BARONESS.

Why, this, to be sure, is freedom of sentiment, and talking like a philosopher. Go, then, thou noble and sublime soul, go, and fall in love with village damsels, be the happy rival of plowmen and hedgers: go, and support the honor of your race.

COUNT.

Good heaven! what must I do? How am I to act?

SCENE II.

THE COUNT, THE BARONESS, BLAISE.

COUNT.

Well, sir, what do you want?

BLAISE.

Your poor gardener, sir, humbly beseeches your honor—

COUNT.

My honor! well, Blaise, and what wouldst thou have of my honor?

BLAISE.

And please, your honor, I would fain—be married and—

COUNT.

With all my heart, Blaise, you have my consent; I like your design, and will assist you. It is well folks should marry. Well, and thy spouse elect, Blaise, what is she? handsome?

BLAISE.

O yes, sir, a delicate little morsel.

BARONESS.

And does she like you, Blaise?

BLAISE.

O yes.

COUNT.

Well, and her name is?

BLAISE.

Yes, 'tis—

COUNT.

What?

BLAISE.

The pretty Nanine.

COUNT.

Nanine?

BARONESS.

Well, very well indeed! I approve of the match extremely.

COUNT.

[*Aside.*

O heaven! how am I sunk! it cannot, must not be.

BLAISE.

I'm sure, master will like it.

COUNT.

What! did you say she loved you, rascal?

BLAISE.

I beg pardon, sir, I—

COUNT.

Did she tell you that she loved you, sir?

BLAISE.

Why, no, sir, not absolutely, sir; not directly; but she seemed to have a little sort of a sneaking kindness for me, too: a hundred times has she said to me in the prettiest, softest, most familiar tone, "Help me, my dear friend Blaise, to make a fine nosegay for my lord, that best of masters;" then would she make the nosegay with such a pretty air, and look so thoughtful, and so absent, and so confused, and so—O it was plain enough.

COUNT.

[*Aside.*

Away, Blaise, get thee gone—Oh! and am I agreeable to her then?

BLAISE.

Nay, master, now don't put off this little affair of mine.

COUNT.

Ha!

BLAISE.

You shall see how this little spot of land will thrive under our hands soon: why won't you answer me, sir? You say nothing.

COUNT.

[*Aside.*

Oh! my heart is too full: I must retire—madam, your servant.

SCENE III.

THE BARONESS, BLAISE.

BARONESS.

[*To herself.*

He loves her to distraction, of that I'm positive: by what charms, by what happy address, could she thus steal his heart from me? Nanine! good heaven! what a choice! what madness! Nanine! no! I shall burst with disappointment.

BLAISE.

What did you say, madam, about Nanine?

BARONESS.

[*To herself.*

Insolent creature!

BLAISE.

Is not Nanine a charming girl?

BARONESS.

No.

BLAISE.

Well, I say no more; but do speak for me, speak for poor Blaise.

BARONESS.

What a dreadful stroke is this!

BLAISE.

I have a little money, madam, a few crowns: my father left me three good acres of land, and they shall be hers; money, and land, everything I have, body and soul, Blaise and all.

BARONESS.

Believe me, Blaise, I wish you as well as you can wish yourself, and should be glad to serve you: I should be glad to see you married this very night: nay, what's more, I'll give her a portion.

BLAISE.

O good, dear baroness! how I do love you! is it possible you can make me so happy?

BARONESS.

Alas! Blaise, I am afraid I cannot; we shall never succeed.

BLAISE.

O but you must, madam.

BARONESS.

I wish to God she was your wife: wait for my orders.

BLAISE.

And must I wait? not long I hope.

BARONESS.

Be gone.

BLAISE.

Servant, madam: I shall have her, I shall have her.

SCENE IV.

BARONESS.

[*Alone.*

What a strange adventure! could I have received a more cruel injury? a more shameful affront? the Count d'Olban rivalled by a gardener—here, boy, [*she calls out to her servant*] fetch Nanine to me: since I am so unhappy, I must examine her: where could she have learned this art of flattery? who taught her to gain hearts, and to preserve them, to light up a strong and a lasting flame? where? doubtless, in her eyes, in plain and simple nature: but this shameful and unworthy passion of his is still a secret; it has not dared as yet to appear openly. D'Olban, I see, has his scruples about it: so much the worse; if he had none, I might still have hopes; but he has all the symptoms of true love: O here she comes, the sight of her hurts me; nature is most unjust, to bestow so much beauty on such a creature; 'tis an affront to nobility: come this way, madam.

SCENE V.

THE BARONESS, NANINE.

NANINE.

Madam.

BARONESS.

And yet, after all, she is not so very handsome;

those great black eyes of hers express nothing; but if they have said, I love; ay, there's the danger: but I must—come this way, child.

NANINE.

I come, madam, as is my duty.

BARONESS.

Yes: but you make me wait a little for you; prithee, child, step on: how awkwardly she is made! what a mien there is! he was never made for such a creature as you.

NANINE.

'Tis very true, madam: I assure you; I have often blushed in secret when I looked on these fine clothes: but they were your first present to me, the effect of that goodness which I shall ever acknowledge, and of that generous care with which you were pleased to honor me: you took a pride in dressing me: O madam, remember how often you have protected me: believe me, madam, I am still the same: why should you wish to humble a submissive heart, which can never forget itself?

BARONESS.

Bring that couch nearer to me—O I am distracted: whence come you? what have you been about?

NANINE.

Reading, madam.

BARONESS.

Reading what?

NANINE.

An English book that was given me.

BARONESS.

What's the subject of it?

NANINE.

'Tis extremely interesting: the author would have us believe that we are all brethren, all born equal, and on a level with each other; but 'tis an idle chimera, I can't reconcile myself to his doctrine.

BARONESS.

[*Aside.*

She will soon, I suppose—what vanity! [*To Nanine*] bring me my standish, and pen and ink.

NANINE.

Yes, madam.

BARONESS.

No; stay: give me something to drink.

NANINE.

What, madam?

BARONESS.

Nothing: it's no matter: take my fan. Go and get my gloves—or—stay—it does not signify, you need not: come hither: I desire you to take care never to think yourself handsome.

NANINE.

That, madam, is a lesson you have so often taught me that if I had so much vanity, and self-love had such influence over my foolish heart, you would soon have cured me of it.

BARONESS.

[*Aside.*

Where can she have learned all this? how I hate her! beauty and wit together! 'tis intolerable—hark'ee, child, you know the tenderness I had for you in your infancy.

NANINE.

Yes, madam, and I hope my youth will be honored with equal goodness from you.

BARONESS.

Be careful then to deserve it: it is my intention now, this very day, nay, this very hour, to fix and establish your happiness; judge then whether I love you.

NANINE.

To fix my happiness?

BARONESS.

Yes: I will give you a portion: the husband I design for you is well-made, and in every way worthy of you; a proper match for you in every particular, and the only one that at present could suit you: you ought to thank me for the choice: in a word, 'tis Blaise, the gardener.

NANINE.

Blaise, madam?

BARONESS.

Yes: why that simpering? do you hesitate a moment to consent? my offers, madam, I would have you know, are commands; obey, or expect my resentment.

NANINE.

But, madam—

BARONESS.

Let me have no *buts;* they offend me: a pretty thing indeed, for your impertinence to refuse a husband at my hands! that simple heart of yours is swelled to a fine degree of vanity: but your boldness is a little premature, and your triumph will be of

short duration: you take advantage of the capricious fortune of one lucky day, but shall soon see what will be the event. You ungrateful little wretch, have you the insolence to please? you understand me, madam, but I'll bring you back to that nothingness whence you came, and you shall lament your folly and your pride: I'll shut you up for the rest of your life in a convent.

NANINE.

On my knees I thank you, madam; do shut me up, my fate will be too mild: yes, madam, of all the benefits you have ever bestowed on me, this, which you call a punishment, I shall esteem the greatest favor: shut me up forever in a cloister; there, I will thank you for your goodness, and bless my dear master: there I shall learn to calm those cruel fears, those dreadful alarms, those worst of evils, those passions that are far more dangerous to me even than your resentment, which fill me with terror and astonishment: O madam, by that anger, I entreat you, deliver me, save me, save me, if possible, from myself; this moment I am ready to go.

BARONESS.

What do I hear? can it be? are you in earnest, Nanine, or mean you to deceive me?

NANINE.

No: indeed I do not. O do me this charming, this divine favor; my heart stands too much in need of it.

BARONESS.

[*With transport.*

Rise then, and let me embrace you. O happy hour! my dear Nanine, my friend, I'll go this instant

and prepare your sweet retreat; O 'tis a charming thing to live in a convent!

NANINE.

'Tis at least a shelter from the world, and all its cares.

BARONESS.

O my dear, 'tis a delightful situation.

NANINE.

Do you think so, madam?

BARONESS.

This world is a hateful place—jealous—

NANINE.

[*Sighing.*

'Tis so indeed.

BARONESS.

Foolish, wicked, vain, deceitful, inconstant, and ungrateful: O 'tis a horrid place.

NANINE.

Yes, I see it would be fatal to me, I ought to flee from it.

BARONESS.

You ought indeed: a good convent is the best haven of security. Now, my good lord, I think I shall be beforehand with you.

NANINE.

Did you say anything about my master, madam?

BARONESS.

O Nanine, I love you even to madness: this moment I would, if possible, lock you up never to come out again: but to-night it is too late, we must wait till morning. Hark'ee, child, come to me at

midnight to my apartment, and we will set off secretly for the convent: be ready by five at the latest.

SCENE VI.

NANINE. [*Alone.*

How distressful is my condition! what trouble and uneasiness do I feel! and what various passions rise in my soul! to leave so good, so amiable a master, perhaps to offend him by it: and yet, if I had stayed, this excess of his goodness might have brought on worse calamities, and put his whole family in confusion. The baroness seems apprehensive that he has a particular regard for me: but his heart could never stoop so low; I must not, dare not think of it: and my lady seems desperately angry about it: am I hated then, and should I be afraid of being beloved? O but myself, myself I have most reason to fear, and my foolish heart, that beats so at the thought of him. What will become of me? taken out of my humble state, my notions now are too refined and too exalted: it is a misfortune, nay, and it is a fault, too, to have a mind above one's condition. I must go: I know it will kill me: but no matter.

SCENE VII.

THE COUNT, NANINE, *a Servant.*

COUNT.

Stay at that door there somebody, d'ye hear? bring chairs here, quick, make haste. [*He bows to Nanine, who makes him a low courtesy.*] Come, sit down.

NANINE.

Who, I, sir?

COUNT.

Yes: I will have it so: I mean to pay you, Nanine, that respect which your conduct, your beauty, and merit deserve: shines the diamond with less lustre, or is it less valuable, because found in a desert? What's the matter? your eyes seem bathed in tears: O I see it but too plainly; our angry baroness, jealous of your charms, has been venting her ill-humors on you, and left my poor girl weeping.

NANINE.

No, sir, no: her goodness, I assure you, to me was never greater than at present; but everything here softens and affects me.

COUNT.

I'm glad to hear it; I was afraid it was some of her malice.

NANINE.

Why so, sir?

COUNT.

O my dear girl, jealousy reigns in every breast: every man is jealous when he is in love, and every woman even before she is so. A young and beautiful girl, who at the same time is good-natured and sincere, is sure to displease her whole sex: men are more just, and we endeavor as well as we can to revenge ourselves on you for your jealousy: but, with regard to Nanine, I only do her justice, I love that heart which is void of artifice; I admire the display of those extraordinary talents which you have so finely cultivated; and I am both surprised and charmed at the ingenuous simplicity of your manners.

NANINE.

O sir, my merit is small indeed; but I have seen you, have heard and been instructed by you: you have raised me too high above my humble birth: I owe you but too much: from you only I have learned to think.

COUNT.

O Nanine, wit and good sense are not to be taught.

NANINE.

I think too much, I fear, for one in my station: my fortune designed me for the lowest rank in life.

COUNT.

Your virtues have placed you in the highest: but tell me ingenuously, what effect had that English book I lent you?

NANINE.

Not convinced me at all, sir: I am more than ever of opinion, that there are hearts so noble and so generous, that all others must appear mean and vile when put in comparison with them.

COUNT.

True, Nanine, and you are yourself a proof of it: but permit me to raise you for the future to a rank and station here less unworthy of you.

NANINE.

My condition, sir, is already too high, and too desirable for me.

COUNT.

No, Nanine, that cannot be: henceforward I shall consider you as one of the family; my mother is

coming, she will look on you as her daughter; my esteem, and her tender friendship, will put you on a different footing, and place you in a better rank than you have hitherto held under a proud and imperious woman.

NANINE.

[*Aside.*

She only taught me my duty, sir—and a hard one it is to fulfil.

COUNT.

What duty? yours, Nanine, is only to please, and that you always perform; would I could do so, too! but you should be more at your ease, and appear with more splendor; you are not yet in your proper sphere.

NANINE.

I am indeed quite out of it, and it is that which makes me unhappy; 'tis my misfortune, perhaps an irreparable one. [*Rising.*] O my lord, my master, remove, I beseech you, from me all these vanities: I am confused, overwhelmed with your excess of goodness; let me live unknown and unenvied; heaven formed me for obscurity, and humility has nothing in it that to me is grating or disagreeable: leave me to my retreat; what should I do in the world, what should I wish to see there, after the admiration of your virtues?

COUNT.

[*To himself.*

It is too much, I can resist no longer.

[*To Nanine.*

You remain in obscurity? you?

NANINE.

Whatever I may do, permit me to ask one favor of you.

COUNT.

What is it? speak.

NANINE.

For some time past you have loaded me with presents.

COUNT.

Pardon me, Nanine, I acted but as a tender father who loved his child: I have not the art to set off my presents by flattery, I aim not at gallantry, and only desire to be just: fortune had done you wrong, and I meant to avenge the injury: but nature, in recompense for it, lavished all her bounties on you, and her I strove to imitate.

NANINE.

You have done a great deal too much; but I flatter myself I may be permitted, without being thought ungrateful, to dispose of those noble presents, which I shall ever hold dear because they came from you.

COUNT.

You mean to affront me, sure.

SCENE VIII.

THE COUNT, NANINE, GERMON.

GERMON.

My lady wants you; she waits.

COUNT.

Let her wait then: what! can't I speak a moment to you without being interrupted?

NANINE.

It gives me pain to leave you; but you know, sir, she was my mistress.

COUNT.

No: I know it not, nor ever will.

NANINE.

She has still a power over me.

COUNT.

No such thing: she shall have none—you sigh, Nanine, there's something at the bottom of that heart; what's the matter?

NANINE.

I am sorry to leave you, sir—but I must—O heaven, now all is over.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE IX.

THE COUNT, GERMON.

COUNT.

[*To himself.*

She wept as she left me; for a long time she has groaned beneath the tyrannical caprice of this peevish baroness, who insults her: and by what right, or what authority? but 'tis an abuse which I will never suffer: this world is nothing but a lottery of wealth, titles, dignities, rights, and privileges, bartered for

without legal claim, and scattered without distinction—here, you—

GERMON.

My lord.

COUNT.

To-morrow morning lay this purse of a hundred louis d'ors on her toilette; be sure you don't fail; you must then go and see after her servants below, they'll wait there.

GERMON.

The baroness shall certainly have them on her toilette according to your orders.

COUNT.

Blockhead, they're not for her: for Nanine, I tell you.

GERMON.

O very well, sir, I beg pardon.

COUNT.

Begone, leave me. [*Germon goes out.*] This tenderness of mine can never be a weakness in me: true, I idolize her; but my heart was not touched by her beauty only, her character is to the last degree amiable: I admire her soul; but then her low condition—it is too high; were she lower, I should love her yet more: but can I marry her? doubtless I may; can one pay too dear for being happy? shall I fear the censure of an idle world, and let pride deprive me of all I wish for? but then custom—a cruel tyrant: nature has a prior right, and should be obeyed: and so I am Blaise's rival, too; and why not? Blaise is a man; he loves her, and he is in the right of it: she can be but in the possession of one,

though the desire of all: gardeners may sigh for her, and so may kings: my happiness will justify my choice.

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

THE COUNT, MARIN.

COUNT.

[*To himself.*

Well; this night is a whole year to me: not once have I closed my eyelids: everybody is asleep but me; Nanine sleeps in peace, a sweet repose refreshes her charms, while I wander from place to place, and can find no rest: I sit down to write, but can't: then strive to read, but all in vain; I don't know the words before me while I am looking on them, nor can my mind retain a single idea: methinks, in every page, I see the name of Nanine imprinted by some hand divine—hullo! who's there? all asleep? Germon, Marin.

MARIN.

[*Behind the scenes.*

Coming, sir.

COUNT.

You idle rascals, make haste, it's broad daylight; come, come.

MARIN.

Lord, sir, what spirit has raised you up so early this morning?

COUNT.

Love.

MARIN.

O ho! my lady will let none of us sleep long in this house; what did you want, sir?

COUNT.

Why, Marin, I must have, let me see, by to-morrow at the latest, six new horses, a new equipage, a clever chambermaid, notable and careful, a valet de chambre, and two footmen, young and well-made, and no libertines; some diamonds, some very fine buckles, some gold trinkets, and some new stuffs; therefore, be gone, ride post to Paris this instant, never mind killing a few horses.

MARIN.

O ho, I see how it is; you are caught; my lady baroness is to be our mistress to-day, I suppose; you are going to be married to her at last?

COUNT.

Whatever my intention is, go you about your business; fly, and make haste back.

MARIN.

I'm gone, sir.

SCENE II.

THE COUNT, GERMON.

COUNT.

[*To himself.*

And shall I then enjoy the sweet pleasure of honoring, of making happy the dear object of my love? The baroness, I know, will be in a rage: with all my heart, let her rave as long as she will; I

despise her, and the world, and its opinion; and am afraid of nobody: I will never be the slave of prejudice; it is an enemy whom we ought to subdue, those who make a rational mind more virtuous, and those only are respectable: but hark! what noise is that in the court? a chariot sure: it must be so; yet who could come at this time in the morning? my mother perhaps. Germon—

GERMON.

Sir.

COUNT.

What is that?

GERMON.

A chariot, sir.

COUNT.

Whose is it? anybody coming here?

GERMON.

No, sir, they're going.

COUNT.

Going? who? where?

GERMON.

The baroness, sir, going out immediately.

COUNT.

O with all my heart, let her go forever if she pleases!

GERMON.

Nanine and she are this minute setting out.

COUNT.

O heaven! what sayest thou? Nanine?

GERMON.

So the maid says, sir.

COUNT.

How is this?

GERMON.

My lady, sir, is going with her this morning, to put her into a neighboring convent.

COUNT.

Away: fly: let us begone: but what am I about? I am too warm to talk to them: no matter, I'll go; I ought—but stop, that must not be, I should at once discover all my passion: no—go, Germon, stop them, let everything be fast; bring Nanine to me, or answer it with your life. [*Germon goes out.*] So they would have carried her off! what a dreadful stroke! ungrateful, cruel, unjust woman! how have I deserved this! what have I done! I only loved and adored her; but never declared my passion; never endeavored to force her inclinations, or to alarm her timid innocence: why should she fly from me? the more I think of it, the more I am astonished.

SCENE III.

THE COUNT, NANINE.

COUNT.

My sweet girl, is it you? what, run away from me? answer me, explain this mystery to me: terrified, I suppose, with the baroness's threats, you were willing to escape; and that tender regard which I have long had for your virtues, I know,

has quickened her resentment; surely you could not yourself have thought of leaving me, of depriving this place of its fairest ornament: last night, when I saw you in tears, tell me, Nanine, had you any intention of this? answer me, tell me, why would you have wished to leave me?

NANINE.

Behold me on my knees, and trembling before you.

COUNT.

[*Raising her up.*

Rise, Nanine, and tell me—I tremble more myself.

NANINE.

My lady, sir—

COUNT.

Well—what of her?

NANINE.

That lady, sir, whom I honor and esteem, did not, I assure you, force me to the convent.

COUNT.

And could it then be your own choice? O misery!

NANINE.

It was, I own it was: I entreated her to restrain my wandering thoughts—she wanted to marry me.

COUNT.

Indeed? to whom?

NANINE.

To your gardener.

COUNT.

O the worthy choice!

NANINE.

I, sir, was ashamed, and to the last degree unhappy: I who in vain endeavor to stifle sentiments far above my condition, I whom your bounty had raised too high, must now be punished by the loss of that goodness which I never deserved.

COUNT.

You punish yourself, Nanine, and for what?

NANINE.

For having dared to raise the resentment of your relation, sir, who was once my mistress; I know, sir, I am disagreeable to her; the very sight of me disgusts her: she has reason indeed, for when I was near her, I was guilty of a weakness which I shall ever feel; it grows on me every hour: but I would have torn it from my breast; I would have humbled, by the austerities of a convent, this proud heart, exalted by your goodness, and revenged on it the involuntary crime: but the bitterest grief I felt was my fear of offending you.

COUNT.

[*Turning from her, and walking about.*

What sentiments! what a noble and ingenuous mind! Can she be prejudiced in my favor? was she afraid of loving me? O exalted virtue!

NANINE.

If I have offended you, I beg a thousand pardons; but permit me, sir, in some deep retreat to hide my sorrows, and to reflect in secret on my own duty, and your goodness to me.

COUNT.

No more of that: now, observe me, the baroness is your friend, and out of her generosity has provided you with a servant, a rustic, a boor, for your husband. I know of one who will at least be less unworthy of you: in birth and fortune far superior to Blaise; young, honest, and well provided for: a man, I assure you, of sense and reflection; his character very different from those of the present age: if I am not much mistaken, he'll make you an excellent husband: is not this better than a convent?

NANINE.

No: sir, I own to you, this new favor which you would bestow on me has nothing in it that can give me any real satisfaction: you know my grateful heart, read there my real sentiments, and see why I wish to retreat from the world: a gardener, or the monarch of the whole world, who should offer marriage to me, would be equally displeasing.

COUNT.

You have determined me: and now, Nanine, know the man for whom I have designed you: you already esteem him: he is yours; he adores you: that husband is—myself. I see, you are troubled and surprised: but speak to me; my life depends on you: O recollect yourself, you are strangely agitated.

NANINE.

What do I hear? can it be?

COUNT.

It is no more than you deserve.

NANINE.

In love with me? O do not think, do not imagine I

will ever dare to claim my conquest: no, sir, never will I suffer you to descend thus low for me: such marriages, believe me, sir, are always unhappy: fancy vanishes, and repentance alone remains. No, I will call your ancestors to witness—alas! sir, think not on me: you took pity on my youth: this heart, which you have formed, which is your own work, would be unworthy of your care, if it could accept from you this noblest present. No, sir, I owe you at least this refusal: my heart shall sacrifice itself for your sake.

COUNT.

No more: for I am resolved, and you shall be my wife. Did you not this moment assure me you would refuse every other man, though he were a prince?

NANINE.

I did, and repent not of the resolution.

COUNT.

Do you hate me then?

NANINE.

Should I have fled, should I have avoided, should I have feared, if I had hated you?

COUNT.

It is enough, and I am fixed.

NANINE.

What then have you determined on?

COUNT.

Our marriage.

NANINE.

Think, sir.

COUNT.

I have thought of everything.

NANINE.

And foreseen too?

COUNT.

I have.

NANINE.

If you love me, believe me, sir—

COUNT.

I do believe—that I have resolved on the only means to make myself happy.

NANINE.

But you forget—

COUNT.

I have forgotten nothing: everything is ordered, and everything shall be ready.

NANINE.

What! in spite of all I say, will your obstinate passion—

COUNT.

Yes, in spite of you, my impatient love must urge the happy moment. I will quit you for a minute, that henceforth we may never part: adieu, my dear Nanine.

SCENE IV.

NANINE. [*Alone.*

Good heaven! do I dream? or am I indeed arrived at the summit of earthly happiness? 'tis not the honor, great as it is; 'tis not the splendor that dazzles me: no: I despise it all: but to wed the most

generous of men, the dear object of all my timid wishes, him whom I was so much afraid of loving, him whom I adore, yet I love him too much to wish he should demean himself for my sake: but it is impossible to avoid it; I cannot now escape him: what can I do? heaven, I trust, will direct me, and support my weakness, perhaps even—but I'll write to him—and yet how to begin, and what to say—what a surprise! I will write immediately before I enter into this solemn engagement.

SCENE V.

NANINE, BLAISE.

BLAISE.

O there she is: well, my little maid, my lady has spoken to you in my favor, has she not? ha! she writes on, and takes no notice of me.

NANINE.

[*Writing on.*

O Blaise, good morrow to you.

BLAISE.

Good morrow is but a cold compliment.

NANINE.

[*Writing.*

Every word I write doubles my distress, and my whole letter is full of doubts and uneasiness.

BLAISE.

How she writes offhand! O she's a great genius; and a monstrous wit: I wish I was a wit too, then I'd tell her—

NANINE.

Well, sir.

BLAISE.

Lackaday, she's so clever, I'm afraid to speak: I shall never be able to break my mind to her—yet I was hot upon't, and came here o' purpose; that I did.

NANINE.

Dear Blaise, you must do me a piece of service.

BLAISE.

Marry, two an' you will.

NANINE.

I shall trust to your discretion, to your good heart, Blaise; nay, I do you but justice.

BLAISE.

O no ceremony; for look you, ma'am, Blaise is ready to serve you, and there's an end of it. Come, come, make no secret.

NANINE.

You often go to the neighboring village, to Remival, the right hand side of the road.

BLAISE.

Yes, yes.

NANINE.

Could you find one Philip Hombert for me there?

BLAISE.

Philip Hombert? I know nothing of him: what sort of a man is he?

NANINE.

He came there, I believe, but yesterday evening;

do you look him up, and give him immediately this money, and this letter.

BLAISE.

Oh, money is it?

NANINE.

And at the same time deliver him this packet: go on horse-back that you may return the sooner: away, make haste, and be assured I'll remember you for it.

BLAISE.

I would go for you to the world's end—this Philip Hombert is a happy rogue: the purse is full: all ready rhino. What, is it a debt?

NANINE.

Yes: and well proved: nothing can be more sacred, therefore take care of it: hark'ee, Blaise, Hombert may not be known in the village, perhaps he is not yet returned: if you can't give the letter into his own hands, bring it me back again: my dear friend, remember that.

BLAISE.

My dear friend!

NANINE.

I shall depend on you.

BLAISE.

Her dear friend! O lud!

NANINE.

I rely entirely upon you, and expect everything from your fidelity.

SCENE VI.

THE BARONESS, BLAISE.

BLAISE.

What a message! and where the deuce could this money come from? it would have been of service to me in housekeeping: but she has a friendship for me, and that's better than money, so away we go.

[*As he is putting the money and letter into his pocket, he meets the baroness, and runs full against her.*

BARONESS.

How now, booby? a little more and you'd have broken my head.

BLAISE.

I beg your pardon, madam.

BARONESS.

Where are you going? have you heard anything of Nanine? what is she about? is the count in a violent passion? what have you got there, a letter?

BLAISE.

O that's a secret: poise on her!

BARONESS.

Let me look at it.

BLAISE.

Nanine will be angry.

BARONESS.

Nanine! could she write, and send it by you? give

it me this minute, or I'll break off your match immediately; give it me, I say.

BLAISE.

[*Laughing.*

He! he!

BARONESS.

What do you laugh at?

BLAISE.

[*Still laughing.*

Ah! ah!

BARONESS.

I must know the contents of this;—[*Breaks open the letter*] if I am not mistaken, they concern me nearly.

BLAISE.

[*Laughing.*

Ah! ah! ah! how she is nicked now! she has got nothing there but a scrap of paper: but I shall keep the money, and carry it to Philip Hombert: yes, yes, must obey my mistress. Servant, ma'am.

SCENE VII.

THE BARONESS.

[*Alone.*

Now let's see what we have got. [*Reads.*] "Both my joy and tenderness are unspeakable, as is my happiness also: what a moment was this for you to come in! when I cannot see or hear you, cannot throw myself into your arms: but, I conjure you, take these packets, and accept the contents of them. Know, I have been offered a most noble and truly

enviable condition in life, such as I might well be dazzled with the prospect of: but there is nothing which I would not sacrifice to the only one on earth whom my heart ought to love." Very fine indeed! upon my word, Nanine, an excellent style: how prettily she writes! the innocent orphan: her passion speaks most eloquently: a rare billet this! O thou sly jade: thus you deceived poor Blaise, and thus deprived me of my lover: this going into a convent, I find, was all a feint, a pretence; and the count's money, it seems, is for Philip Hombert: thou little coquette! but I am glad of it: the count's perfidiousness to me deserved this return: I thought indeed Nanine's heart was as mean as her birth, and now I am satisfied of it.

SCENE VIII.

THE COUNT, BARONESS.

BARONESS.

But here comes the philosopher, the sentimental Count d'Olban, the wise lover, the man above prejudice: your servant, noble count, approach and laugh, my dear lover, at the most ridiculous circumstance: do you know Philip Hombert, of Remival? but, to be sure, you can't be a stranger to your—rival.

COUNT.

What is all this, pray?

BARONESS.

This billet perhaps will inform you: this Hombert must be a handsome lad.

COUNT.

You are too late, madam, now with your schemes; my resolution once made, I am not to be shaken: be satisfied, madam, with the shameful trick you wanted to play me this morning.

BARONESS.

You'll find this new one worse, I believe: there, read: [*Gives him the letter*] you'll like it vastly: you know the hand, and you know the virtue of the dear nymph that has subdued you: [*While he is reading it he seems confounded, grows pale and angry*] well, sir, what think you of the style?—he sees nothing, says nothing, hears nothing: poor man! but he deserves it.

COUNT.

Did I read aright? it cannot be. I am astonished, thunder-struck; ungrateful sex! perfidious creature!

BARONESS. [*Aside.*

I know his temper well; naturally violent, quick and resolute: he'll do something immediately.

SCENE IX.

THE COUNT, BARONESS, GERMON.

GERMON.

Yonder comes Madam d'Olban: she's in the avenue already.

BARONESS.

Is the old woman returned?

GERMON.

Sir, sir, my lady, your mother, is coming.

BARONESS.

His anger has taken away his hearing: the letter operates finely.

GERMON.

[*Bawling out to him.*

Sir.

COUNT.

Does she think—

GERMON.

[*Aloud.*

My lady, sir, your mother.

COUNT.

What is Nanine doing at this instant?

GERMON.

Writing in her own apartment—but, sir—

COUNT.

[*With an air of coolness.*

Go, seize her papers; bring me what she writes, and then let her be sent away.

GERMON.

Who, sir?

COUNT.

Nanine.

GERMON.

I can never have the heart to do it, sir: O sir, if you knew how she charms us all, so noble, so good!

COUNT.

Do it, sir, or see my face no more.

GERMON.

I obey, sir.

[*He goes out.*

SCENE X.

THE COUNT, BARONESS.

BARONESS.

Now, the day is ours: I give you joy, sir, of your return to reason: now, sir, is it not true as I told you, the low-bred always retain something of their former condition, and persons of family alone have hearts truly noble? Blood, sir, let me tell you, does everything, and meanness of birth will inspire Nanine with sentiments you never suspected her of.

COUNT.

That I don't believe: but come, we'll talk no more about it, but endeavor to make amends for past errors: every man has his follies, at some part of his life; we all go wrong; and he is least to blame who repents the soonest.

BARONESS.

'Tis well observed.

COUNT.

Never mention her to me again: be silent on that head, I entreat you.

BARONESS.

Most willingly.

COUNT.

I beg this subject of our dispute may be entirely forgotten.

BARONESS.

But will you remember then your former vows?

COUNT.

Well, well, I understand you, I will.

BARONESS.

And quickly, too, or you will not repair the injury: our marriage so shamefully deferred is an affront—

COUNT.

That shall be made amends for; but, madam, we must have—

BARONESS.

Have what? we must have a lawyer.

COUNT.

You know, madam, that—I waited for my mother.

BARONESS.

And here she comes.

SCENE XI.

THE MARCHIONESS D'OLBAN, THE COUNT, BARONESS.

COUNT.

[*To his mother.*

Madam, I should have—[*Aside*] O Philip Hombert! [*To his mother*] but you have prevented me: my respect and tenderness—[*Aside*] with that air of innocence too! perfidious wretch!

MARCHIONESS.

Why, you rave, child; I heard indeed, as I passed through Paris, that your head was a little touched, and I find there was some truth in it; how long has this misfortune—

COUNT.

Good heaven! how confused I am!

MARCHIONESS.

Does it seize you often?

COUNT.

It never will again, madam.

MARCHIONESS.

I should be glad to speak with you alone. [*Turns to the baroness and makes her a formal courtesy.*] Good morrow, madam.

BARONESS.

[*Aside.*

The old fool! [*Turning to the Marchioness*] Madam, I leave you the pleasure of entertaining the count at your leisure, and retire.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE XII.

THE MARCHIONESS, THE COUNT.

MARCHIONESS.

[*Talking very fast, and in the manner of a little prattling old woman.*

Well, sir, and so you intend to make the baroness my daughter-in-law: 'twas this, to tell you the truth, that brought me here so soon: she's a peevish, impertinent, proud, opinionated creature, and one who never had the least regard for me: last year, when I supped with the Marchioness Agard, she said before all the company, I was a babbler. Lord for-

bid I should ever sup there again: a babbler! besides, I know, between you and me, she is not so rich; and that, let me tell you, son, is a great point, and we ought to be well-informed about it: they tell me that the Château d'Orme did but half of it belong to her husband, and that the other half was disputed by a long lawsuit, that is not finished to this day: that I had from your grandpapa, and he always told the truth: ay, he was a man; there are few such nowadays: there is nothing now at Paris but a set of half-men, vain, foolish, impertinent coxcombs, talking on every subject, and laughing at times past. Oh, their eternal clack distracts me, prating about new kitchens, and new fashions: we hear of nothing now but bankrupts, and distress, and ruin: the wives, in short, are licentious, and the husbands simpletons: everything grows worse and worse.

COUNT.

[*Reading the letter over again.*

Who could have thought it? this is a desperate stroke indeed. Well, Germon?

SCENE XIII.

THE MARCHIONESS, THE COUNT, GERMON.

GERMON.

Here's your lawyer, sir.

COUNT.

O let him wait.

GERMON.

And here's the paper, sir, she sent you.

COUNT.

[*Reading.*

Give it me—well, let me see: she loves me, she says here, and refuses me out of—respect. Faithless woman! thou hast not told me the true reason of that refusal.

MARCHIONESS.

My son's head is certainly turned: 'tis the baroness's doing: love has taken away his senses.

COUNT.

[*To Germon.*

Is Nanine gone! shall I be rid of her?

GERMON.

Alas! sir, she has already put on her old rustic garb with the greatest modesty, and never murmured or complained.

COUNT.

Very likely so.

GERMON.

She bore her misfortune with the utmost tranquillity, while everybody about her was in tears.

COUNT.

With tranquillity, sayest thou?

MARCHIONESS.

Whom are you talking about?

GERMON.

O madam, poor Nanine, she is going to be driven away, and everybody laments the loss of her.

MARCHIONESS.

To be driven away? how is this? I don't understand it: what! my little Nanine go! call her back

again: my charming orphan! what has she done, pray? why, Nanine was my present to you. O I remember, at ten years of age she delighted everybody that saw her: our baroness took her, and I said then she would be ill-used; I knew it would be so: but you never mind what I say; you will do everything of your own head: but let me tell you, turning Nanine out of doors thus is a very bad action.

COUNT.

Alone, on foot, without money, without assistance!

GERMON.

O sir, I forgot to tell you: an old man asked after you below, and says he wants to speak to you on an affair of importance, which he can communicate to none but yourself: he wants to throw himself at your feet.

COUNT.

In my present unhappy situation of mind, am I fit to converse with anybody?

MARCHIONESS.

You are uneasy enough, I believe, child, and so am I, too, to drive away poor Nanine, and make up a marriage which you knew would be disagreeable to me: come, it was not a wise thing: in three months' time you will be weary of one another: I'll tell you what happened exactly like this to my cousin the Marquis of Marmure: his wife was as sour as verjuice, though, by the by, yours is worse; when they married, they thought they loved one another, and in two months after they were parted. My lady went to live with her gallant, a foolish, sharking, extravagant fop; and my lord took a vile, tricking, ridiculous coquette! fine suppers, country

houses, horses, clothes, a rascally steward, new trinkets bought on trust, lawyers, contracts, interest-money, all together soon ruined them, and in two years both went together to the hospital. O, and now I think of it, I remember another story, more tragical, and more extraordinary than the other, it was of a—

COUNT.

My dear mother, we must go in to dinner: come —could I ever have suspected such infidelity!

MARCHIONESS.

'Tis really dreadful: but I'll tell it you all at table: in proper time and place, son, it may be of great use to you. Away.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

NANINE, *clothed as a country girl,* GERMON.

GERMON.

We are all in tears at the thought of losing you.

NANINE.

It is time to go: I've staid too long already.

GERMON.

But you won't leave us forever, I hope, and in this dress, too?

NANINE.

Obscurity was my first condition.

GERMON.

What a change! and only from this morning: to suffer is nothing, but to be degraded is terrible.

NANINE.

No, no, there are a thousand times worse misfortunes.

GERMON.

I admire your patience and humility; surely my master must have been ill-advised: our baroness has certainly abused her power: she must have done you this injury, the count could never have the heart.

NANINE.

I am indebted to him for everything; and, if he thinks fit to banish me, I must submit; his favors are his own, and he has a right to recall them.

GERMON.

Who would ever have expected such a change? what do you intend to do with yourself?

NANINE.

To retire, and repent.

GERMON.

How we shall all detest the baroness!

NANINE.

They have made me miserable, but I forgive them.

GERMON.

But what shall I tell my master from you when you are gone?

NANINE.

Tell him, I thank him for restoring me to my

former condition: tell him that, forever sensible of his goodness, I shall forget nothing but his—cruelty.

GERMON.

You melt my very soul; I could leave this house immediately to go along with you wherever you went: but Blaise is beforehand with us all: he will go and live with you, and we are all ready to follow him.

NANINE.

No, Germon, that I'm sure you are not. O Germon, to be driven out in this manner—and by whom?

GERMON.

The devil is certainly at the bottom of this business: you are leaving us, and my master is going to be married.

NANINE.

Married, sayest thou? indeed? nay, then let us be gone: O he was too dangerous for me—farewell.

GERMON.

Well! after all, my master must have a cruel heart, to banish so sweet a creature: she seems a most amiable girl, but in this world one should swear to nothing.

SCENE II.

THE COUNT, GERMON.

COUNT.

Well, is she gone at last?

GERMON.

Yes, sir, 'tis done.

COUNT.

I'm glad of it.

GERMON.

Then, sir, you have a heart of iron.

COUNT.

Did Philip Hombert meet and give her his hand?

GERMON.

What Philip Hombert, sir? alas! sir, poor Nanine went off without a creature to give her his hand; she would not even accept of mine.

COUNT.

And where is she gone?

GERMON.

That I know not; most probably to her friends.

COUNT.

Ay, at Remival, I suppose.

GERMON.

Yes, I believe she went that road.

COUNT.

Go, Germon, immediately, and conduct her to that convent where the baroness was going this morning, I'll lodge her in that safe retreat: these hundred louis d'ors will secure her reception; carry them to her, but take care she does not know they come from me: tell her 'tis a present from my mother: on no account mention my name to her.

GERMON.

Very well, sir, I shall obey your orders.

[*He goes towards the door.*

COUNT.

Germon, you saw her as she went off?

GERMON.

I did, sir.

COUNT.

Did she seem dejected? did she weep?

GERMON.

She behaved still better, sir; a few tears dropped from her, but she strove as much as she could to repress them.

COUNT.

Did she let fall anything that betrayed her sentiments? did you remark—

GERMON.

What, sir?

COUNT.

Did she say anything of me?

GERMON.

Yes, sir; a great deal.

COUNT.

Tell me, then, rascal, what did she say?

GERMON.

That you were her master, her best and kindest benefactor; that she shall forget everything—but your cruelty.

COUNT.

Away—be sure you take care she never returns; [*Germon going out*] and hark'ee, Germon.

GERMON.

Sir.

COUNT.

One word more: remember, if, by chance, as you are conducting her, one Philip Hombert should follow you, that you treat him in a proper manner.

GERMON.

O, sir, I'll use him most politely, and treat him with a good drubbing, that you may depend on: I'll do the business honestly, I warrant you: young Hombert, you say?

COUNT.

The same.

GERMON.

Very well: I have not the honor to know him, but the first man I see will I trim most heartily, and afterwards make him tell me his name. [*He goes towards the door and comes back.*] This young Hombert, I'll lay my life, is some lover of hers, a beau, a prig, I suppose, the cock of the village. Let me alone to deal with him.

COUNT.

Do as I bid you, and immediately.

GERMON.

I thought there was some lover in the case—and Blaise, too, puts in his claim, I suppose. Ay: they always love their equals better than their masters.

COUNT.

Begone, I tell you.

SCENE III.

THE COUNT.

[*Alone.*

He's in the right, and has hit on the true cause of my unhappiness, but I shall myself be the punisher of my own folly. I must now marry the baroness; it is determined, and I can't avoid it: 'tis dreadful; but I have deserved it; 'twill at least be a convenient match: she's not very tractable indeed, but every man may rule, if he has a mind to it; and he who has resolution may, at any time, be master in his own house.

SCENE IV.

THE COUNT, BARONESS, MARCHIONESS.

MARCHIONESS.

Well, son, you are going to marry this lady here?

COUNT.

Yes, madam.

MARCHIONESS.

This night she is to be your wife and my daughter-in-law?

BARONESS.

If you approve of it, madam; I suppose I shall have your consent.

MARCHIONESS.

Why, I must give it, I think: but to-morrow I shall take my leave of you.

COUNT.

Your leave, madam, why so?

MARCHIONESS.

I shall take my Nanine with me: since you have thought fit to turn her out of doors, I shall take her under my protection: I have a match in my eye for her: I propose marrying her to the young chief justice, nephew to the attorney-general, Jean Roc Souci; he whose father met with that comical adventure at Corbeil; you must have heard of him: yes, I will take care of this poor child, I'm determined: she is a jewel, and deserves to be well set. I'll marry her off immediately. Your servant.

COUNT.

My dear mother, don't be in a passion: leave me to manage my own affairs, and let Nanine go into a convent.

BARONESS.

Indeed, madam, you may believe us, such a girl as Nanine is not fit to go into a family.

MARCHIONESS.

Ha! why, what's the matter?

BARONESS.

O a little affair only.

MARCHIONESS.

But pray—

BARONESS.

O nothing at all.

MARCHIONESS.

Nothing! a great deal, I'm afraid: I understand you mighty well: some little indiscretion I suppose:

nothing more likely, for to be sure, she's very handsome. Ay, ay, we are all frail; we tempt, and are tempted; the heart has its weakness: young girls are always a little coquettish: but come, it is not so bad as you make it; tell me fairly, what my poor child has done?

COUNT.

I tell you, madam?

MARCHIONESS.

You seem, after all, at the bottom to have some regard for the girl, and perhaps you may—

SCENE V.

THE COUNT, MARCHIONESS, BARONESS, MARIN. [*Booted.*

MARIN.

I've done it, sir; it's all agreed for.

MARCHIONESS.

What's agreed for?

BARONESS.

Ay, what, sir, what?

MARIN.

Why, sir, I've done as you ordered me, spoke to the tradesmen, and you'll have your equipage tomorrow.

BARONESS.

What equipage?

MARIN.

Everything, madam, that your future spouse had ordered; six fine horses, and a charming berlin; I'm

sure your ladyship will like it; it's very fine; the panels all varnished by Martin: the diamonds, too, are brilliant, and well-chosen; and the new stuffs quite in taste.—O nothing comes up to them.

BARONESS.

[*To the count.*

And had you ordered all this?

COUNT.

I had—[*Aside*] but for whom!

MARIN.

Everything will come to-morrow morning in the coach, and will be ready for your wedding in the evening: O there's nothing like Paris for getting everything at a minute's warning, if you have but money. As I came back, I called on the lawyer; he's just by, finishing your affair.

BARONESS.

It has hung a long time in suspense.

MARCHIONESS.

[*Aside.*

I wish it would hang these forty years.

MARIN.

In the hall I met a poor old man, sighing and in tears; he has waited a long time, he says, and begs to speak to you.

BARONESS.

An impertinent fellow! let him go about his business: he has chosen the wrong time to trouble us now.

MARCHIONESS.

Why, so, madam? have a little consideration; son,

let me tell you, it's very wrong to repulse poor people in this manner; I have told you over and over, when you were a child, you ought to treat them with indulgence; hear what they have to say; be courteous, and affable to them: are not they men as well as yourself? we don't know perhaps whom we affront, and may repent our hardness of heart: the proud never prosper. [*To Marin.*] Go, see to that old man.

MARIN.

I will, ma'am. [*He goes out.*]

COUNT.

Forgive me, madam, my respects are always due to you, and I am ready to see this man, in spite of my present embarrassment.

SCENE VI.

THE COUNT, MARCHIONESS, BARONESS, A PEASANT.

MARCHIONESS.

[*To the Peasant.*

Come, come, speak, don't be afraid.

PEASANT.

O my lord, for heaven's sake, hear me; permit me to fall at your feet, and to give you back—

COUNT.

Rise, friend; I'll not be knelt to; do not imagine me capable of such pride: you seem to be an honest man, do you want employment in my family? who are you?

MARCHIONESS.

Cheer up, man.

PEASANT.

Alas! sir, I am the father of—Nanine.

COUNT.

You?

BARONESS.

Your daughter's a slut.

PEASANT.

This, sir, is what I feared: this is the cruel stroke that has wounded my poor heart: I thought indeed so much money could not fairly belong to one in her condition: we little folks soon lose our integrity when we come among the great.

BARONESS.

There he's right enough: but still he's a deceiver, for Nanine is not his daughter, she was an orphan.

PEASANT.

It is too true, she was so: I left her with her poor relatives in her infant years, having lost her mother, with all my fortune; obliged by necessity, I went to serve abroad; and as I would not have her pass for the daughter of a soldier, forbade her ever to mention my name.

MARCHIONESS.

Why so? for my part, I respect a soldier: we stand in need of them sometimes.

COUNT.

What is there shameful in the profession?

PEASANT.

It meets indeed with less honor than it deserves.

COUNT.

The prejudice against them is inexcusable. I own, I esteem an honest soldier, who hazards his life in the defence of his king and country, much more than an important, self-sufficient scoundrel, whose knavish industry sucks up the blood of his fellow subjects.

MARCHIONESS.

You must have been in a great many battles: let me have an account of them all; I long to hear it.

PEASANT.

In my present unhappy condition you must excuse me: let it suffice to inform you, that I received a thousand promises of advancement; but, without friends, how was it possible to rise? thrown amongst the common crowd, all I could do was to distinguish myself, and honor my only reward.

MARCHIONESS.

You were then well-born?

BARONESS.

Fie: how can you think so! well-born indeed!

PEASANT.

No, madam: but I was born of honest parents, and merited—a better daughter.

MARCHIONESS.

Could you have had a better?

COUNT.

Well! go on.

MARCHIONESS.

A better than Nanine?

COUNT.

Prithee, go on.

PEASANT.

My daughter, I understood, was brought up here, and treated in the kindest manner; I thought myself happy, and blessed heaven for your goodness, and paternal care of her; I came to the neighboring village, full of hopes and fears; I own I trembled for her dangerous youth; and, by this lady's intimation, find I had but too much reason; it has shocked me to the soul; but I thought a hundred louis d'ors, besides diamonds, was a treasure too great to be fairly come by: she could never be mistress of them, but at the expense of her innocence: the bare suspicion makes me shudder; if it be so, I shall die with grief and shame: but I came as soon as possible, to give them you back again: they are yours, therefore, I beseech you, take them: if my daughter is to blame, punish me, but don't ruin her.

MARCHIONESS.

O my dear son, I cannot bear this; it overpowers me.

BARONESS.

What is all this? a dream? a trick?

COUNT.

O what have I done?

PEASANT.

[*Taking out the purse and the letter.*

Here, sir, take them.

COUNT.

I take them! no: they were given to her, and she

has made a noble use of them: was it to you, then, the message was delivered? who brought it?

PEASANT.

Your gardener, sir, in whom Nanine ventured to confide.

COUNT.

Was it directed to you?

PEASANT.

It was, I own it, sir.

COUNT.

O grief! O tenderness! what excess of virtue in them both! but now your name?—O I am lost, distracted.

MARCHIONESS.

Ay, your name. What mystery is this?

PEASANT.

Philip Hombert de Gatine.

COUNT.

O my father!

BARONESS.

What does he say?

COUNT.

How day breaks in upon me! I have done wrong, and I must make amends for it: O if you knew how culpable I have been! I have injured the sublimest virtue. [*He steps aside, and speaks to one of his servants.*] away: fly.

BARONESS.

What is all this emotion for?

COUNT.

My coach immediately.

MARCHIONESS.

Now, madam, you must be her protectress: when we have done such an injury, we should blush at nothing so much as an imperfect repentance; my son often has his whims, which people are too apt to mistake for unpardonable follies; but at bottom he has a generous soul, and is naturally good; I can do what I please with him: you, my daughter-in-law, are not so well-disposed.

BARONESS.

I shall grow out of all patience: how confused and thoughtful he looks! what strange scheme now is he meditating upon? well, sir, what do you intend to do?

MARCHIONESS.

Ay, for Nanine?

BARONESS.

Make her a handsome present, and satisfy her.

MARCHIONESS.

That will be the least we can do.

BARONESS.

But as to seeing her that I never will: she shall not come nigh the castle: do you hear me?

COUNT.

Yes, I hear you.

MARCHIONESS.

[*Aside.*

What a heart of stone!

BARONESS.

Don't give my suspicions cause to break out, sir. Ha! you hesitate.

COUNT.

[*After a pause of some time.*

No, madam, I am resolved.

BARONESS.

That respect at least is owing to me; nay, to both of us.

MARCHIONESS.

And can you be so cruel, son?

BARONESS.

What step do you propose to take?

COUNT.

'Tis taken already: you know my heart, madam, and the frankness of it: I must be plain with you: I had promised you my hand; but the design of our marriage was only to put an end to a tedious law-suit between us, which I will now do immediately, by willingly resigning to you all those rights and pretensions which were the foundation of it: even the interest shall be yours; I give up everything, take, and enjoy it: if we cannot be man and wife, let us at least live as friends and relatives: let everything that gave mutual uneasiness be forgotten; there is no reason why, because we can't love, we should hate each other.

BARONESS.

Your falsehood is what I expected: but I renounce your presents, and yourself: yes, traitor, I see now who you mean to live with, and how low your pas-

sion sinks you: go, and be a slave to her, I leave you to your unworthy choice.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE VII.

THE COUNT, MARCHIONESS, PHILIP HOMBERT.

COUNT.

No, madam, 'tis not unworthy, my soul is not blinded by an idle passion: that virtue which it is my duty to reward ought to melt, but cannot debase me: what they call meanness in this old man constitutes his merit, and makes him truly noble: if I would be so, I must pay the price of it: where souls are thus ennobled by themselves, and distinguished by superior characters, we should pass over common rules: their birth, low as it is, when attended with such virtues, will make my family but more illustrious.

MARCHIONESS.

What are you talking about?

SCENE VIII.

THE COUNT, MARCHIONESS, NANINE, PHILIP HOMBERT.

COUNT.

[*To his mother.*

Look at her, and guess.

MARCHIONESS.

[*To Nanine.*

My dearest child, come to my arms: but she is strangely clothed, and yet how handsome she looks, and modest too!

NANINE.

[*Pays her respects to the Marchioness, and then runs to her father.*

O nature demands my first acknowledgments, my dear father!

PHILIP HOMBERT.

O heaven! my daughter! O sir, you have made me amends for forty years' afflictions.

COUNT.

Ay, but how must I repair the injury I have done to such exalted virtue! to come back in this dress, how mean it is, but she adorns it; Nanine does honor to everything: speak, my Nanine, can your goodness pardon the affront?

NANINE.

Can you, sir, doubt my forgiveness of it? I never thought, after all your bounty to me, you could injure me.

COUNT.

If you have indeed forgotten the wrong I did you, give me a proof of it: once more, and only once, I take upon me to command you; but this once you must swear—to obey me.

PHILIP HOMBERT.

I am sure she owes it to you, and her gratitude—

NANINE.

[*To her father.*

He need not doubt, sir, of my obedience.

COUNT.

I shall depend on it: let me tell you then, that all your duty is not yet paid: I have seen you on your knees to my mother, and to your own father; one thing still remains for you, and that is, now, before them, to embrace—your husband.

NANINE.

Who? I?

MARCHIONESS.

Are you in earnest? can it be?

PHILIP HOMBERT.

O my child!

COUNT.

[*To his mother.*

By your permission, madam.

MARCHIONESS.

My dear child, the family will be in a strange uproar about it.

COUNT.

O when they see Nanine, they must approve.

PHILIP HOMBERT.

What a stroke of fortune! O sir, I never thought you could descend thus low.

COUNT.

You promised to obey, and I must have it so.

MARCHIONESS.

My son.

COUNT.

My happiness, madam, depends on this important moment: interest alone, we know, has made a thousand marriages; we have seen the wisest men consult fortune and character only: her character is irreproachable; and as to fortune, she wants it not: justice and inclination shall do what avarice has so often done before: let me, then, madam, have your consent, and finish all.

NANINE.

No, madam, you must not consent; indeed you must not; oppose his passion, oppose mine: let me entreat you, do: love has blinded him, do you, madam, remove the veil: let me live far from him, and at a distance only adore his virtues: you know my condition; you see my father: can I, ought I, ever to wish to call you mother?

MARCHIONESS.

Yes; you can, you ought: it is enough: I can hold out no longer: this last generosity has entirely subdued me: it tells me how much I ought to love: it is as singular, as extraordinary, as Nanine herself.

NANINE.

Then, madam, I obey; my heart can no longer resist the power of love.

MARCHIONESS.

Let this happy day be the worthy recompense of virtue, but let it not be made a precedent.

End of the Third and Last Act.

THE PRUDE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MME. DE DORFISE, a Widow.
MME. DE BURLET, her Cousin.
COLLETTE, Chambermaid to Dorfise.
BLANDFORD, Captain of a Ship.
DARMIN, his Friend.
BARTOLIN, a Cashier.
MONDOR, a Coxcomb.
ADINE, Niece to Darmin, and disguised like a young Turk.

SCENE MARSEILLES.

This comedy is partly imitated from an English piece, called the PLAIN DEALER. It does not suit very well for the French stage; the manners are too rough and bold, though much less so than in the original. The English seem to take too much liberty, and the French too little.

T. S.

THE PRUDE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

DARMIN, ADINE.

ADINE.

[*Dressed like a Turk.*

O my dear uncle, what a cruel voyage! what dangers have we run! and then my dress and appearance, too: still must I conceal under this turban my sex, my name, and the secret of my foolish heart.

DARMIN.

At last we are returned safe: in good truth, niece, I pity you; but, your father dying consul in Greece, both of us left, as we were after his death, without money or friends; your youth, beauty and accomplishments but so many dangerous advantages; and, to crown all our misfortunes, that wicked pasha desperately in love with you; what was to be done? you were obliged to disguise yourself, and make your escape as soon as possible.

ADINE.

Alas! I have yet other dangers to encounter.

DARMIN.

Dear girl, be composed, nor blush at what can't be prevented; embarking with me in such a hurry, and forced to disguise yourself in that manner, you could not with any decency resume your sex on board a ship before a hundred sailors, who were more to be

feared than your old debauched pasha; but happily for us, everything has turned out well, and we are safely arrived at Marseilles, out of the reach of amorous pashas, near your friends and relatives, amongst Frenchmen, and good sort of people.

ADINE.

Blandford is certainly an honest man: but how dearly will his virtues cost me! that I should be forced to return with him!

DARMIN.

Your deceased father designed you for him: he had set his heart on that match when you were but a child.

ADINE.

There he was deceived.

DARMIN.

Blandford, my dear, when he is better acquainted with you, will do justice to your charms: he can never be long attached to a prude, who makes it her perpetual study to deceive and impose upon him.

ADINE.

They say she is handsome: he is constant in his nature, and will always love her.

DARMIN.

Constant! who is so, in love, child?

ADINE.

I am afraid of Dorfise.

DARMIN.

She has too much intrigue about her: her prudery, they say, has a little too much gallantry in it: her

heart is false, and her tongue scandalous; never fear her, my girl, deceit can last only for a time.

ADINE.

Ay, but that time may be long, very long: the thought makes me miserable: Dorfise deceives him, and Dorfise has found the way to please.

DARMIN.

But, after all, niece, has Blandford really got so far into your heart?

ADINE.

He has, indeed; ever since that day, when the two Algerine vessels attacked us with such violence: O how I trembled for him! I think verily I was as much frightened for him as for you; I wished to be a man, indeed, that I might have defended him: don't you remember, uncle, it was Blandford alone who saved us when our ship was on fire? good heaven! how I admired his courage, and his virtues! they are deeply engraved in my heart, and never to be effaced.

DARMIN.

A grateful heart cannot but be prejudiced in favor of such distinguished virtue. I don't so much wonder at your choice: fine eyes, a noble demeanor, a good shape, and scarce thirty years of age, these are great recommendations to his—virtue: but then his strange humor and austerity can surely never be agreeable to you.

ADINE.

Why not? I am naturally serious myself, and perhaps in him may be fond even of my own faults.

DARMIN.

He hates the world.

ADINE.

They say he has reason.

DARMIN.

His temper is too easy and complying, he relies too much on others, and is too generous; and then his moroseness makes his freedom disagreeable.

ADINE.

The greatest fault he has, in my opinion, is his passion for Dorfise.

DARMIN.

That's too true; why, then, won't you endeavor to open his eyes, disabuse him, and shine in your true character?

ADINE.

How is it possible to shine in any character till we are able to please? alas! from the first day he took us both on board, I have been afraid he should discover me, and now I am on shore I have still the same apprehensions.

DARMIN.

I had intended to discover you to him myself.

ADINE.

For heaven's sake, don't; but join with me in my design upon him: sacrificed as I am to the adored Dorfise, I would wish to remain still unknown to him, and would have him continue a stranger to that victim which he offers up to love.

DARMIN.

What then is your design?

ADINE.

This very night to retire to a convent, and avoid

the sight of an ungrateful man whom I cannot help loving.

DARMIN.

Indeed, niece, those who go to a convent in haste, generally live to repent it at leisure: I tell you, child, time will do all things: in the meanwhile, a more dreadful misfortune calls for our attention: the very instant that this new Du-Gué so nobly got off his ship, both his fortune and mine went to the bottom: we are both involved in the same calamity, and have come to Marseilles full of hope, but without a shilling! and must therefore look out for some immediate assistance: love, my dear niece, is not always the only thing to be thought of.

ADINE.

There, uncle, I differ from you; when you are in love, I think it is.

DARMIN.

Time will open your eyes: love, my dear, at your age is blind, but not at mine; and where there is no fortune, and nothing but grief and poverty with it, it has very few charms; only the rich and happy should be in love.

ADINE.

You think, then, my dear uncle, that now you are in distress you can have no mistress; and that your widow Burlet will forsake you as soon as she knows your circumstances.

DARMIN.

My distress perhaps may serve her for an excuse; such, my dear, is the custom of the world; but I have other cares to afflict me: I want money, and that's the most pressing calamity.

SCENE II.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, ADINE.

BLANDFORD.

So! so! in the age we live in everything may be had of everybody but money: what a heap of close embraces, kisses, fulsome compliments, false oaths, joyous welcomes, have I received from this whole city! but no sooner were they acquainted with my distress than every soul forsook me: such is this world.

DARMIN.

It is indeed a base one: but your friends come in search of you?

BLANDFORD.

Friends? know you any such? I have looked for them, and have found a number of scoundrels of every rank and degree: I have found honest men, too, that live in the bosom of indolence and plenty, like their own marbles, hard, polished, and always wrapped up in themselves, and their own interests; but worthy hearts, elevated souls, who were not the slaves of fortune, such as take a generous pleasure in relieving the unhappy, these, Darmin, I have seldom, very seldom met with: there is naught but vice and corruption on every side: Mammon is the god of this world; and I wish with all my heart, that all mankind had sunk with our vessel, and was buried in the waves.

DARMIN.

Be so good as to except me from your general sentence.

ADINE.

The world, I do believe, is false: and yet I think there is in it still a heart worthy of you; a heart that can boast of courage with sensibility, and strength with softness; which would resent the unkind treatment you have met with, by loving you, if possible, but the more for it: tender in its vows, and constant in its attachment to you.

BLANDFORD.

Invaluable treasure! but where is it to be found?

ADINE.

In me.

BLANDFORD.

In thee! away, deceitful boy, am I in a condition, think you, to listen to such idle tales? prithee, young man, choose a fitter time to jest in: yes, even in this world, I know there are pure and uncorrupted hearts, who will cherish my misfortune, and pity my distress: even in this low condition I have the happiness to reflect, that Dorfise at least knows how to love and to distinguish virtue.

ADINE.

Dorfise then is the idol of your heart?

BLANDFORD.

She is.

ADINE.

You have tried and proved her then?

BLANDFORD.

I have.

DARMIN.

My late brother, before he went to Greece, if I remember aright, designed my niece for you.

BLANDFORD.

Your late brother, my friend, made a bad choice then: I have made a much better: I have determined in favor of that virtue which, banished from the world, hath taken up its residence in the breast of my Dorfise.

ADINE.

Merit like hers is rare indeed; I am astonished at it, but, great as it is, it cannot equal her happiness.

BLANDFORD.

This youth is of a noble nature, and I love him; he takes my part even against you.

DARMIN.

Not so much perhaps as you think: but pray tell me, how happened it that this Dorfise, with all her attachment and love for you, never wrote to you for a whole year?

BLANDFORD.

Would you have had her write to me through the air, or the post travel by sea? I have received large packets from her before now, letters written in such a style too—so much truth, so much good sense, nothing affected, embarrassed, or obscure, no false wit, nothing but the language of nature and the heart; such is the effect of real love.

DARMIN.

[*To Adine.*

You turn pale.

BLANDFORD.

[*Looking earnestly at Adine.*

What's the matter with you?

ADINE.

With me, sir? O sir, I have got a sad pain at my heart.

BLANDFORD.

[*To Darmin.*

His heart! and what a tone, too! a girl of his age would have more strength and courage: I love the lad, but am astonished at his effeminacy: he was never made for such a voyage; he's afraid of the sea, the enemy, and every wind that blows: I caught him one day sitting down to a looking-glass: he appears to be cut out for the gay world, to sit in a box at a playhouse and admire his fine form, which he seems to be mightily enamored with: 'tis a very Narcissus.

DARMIN.

He has beauty.

BLANDFORD.

Ay, but he should beware of vanity.

ADINE.

You need not fear, sir, 'tis not myself that I admire: I am more likely to hate myself, I assure you; I love nothing that resembles me.

BLANDFORD.

Dorfise, my friend, is after all the mistress of my fate: convinced as I have long been of her prudence, I gave her a promise of marriage; at parting I left everything I had in her possession: jewels, notes, contracts, ready money, all, thank heaven, have I frankly trusted to my dear Dorfise; and her I consigned to the virtue of my friend, M. Bartolin.

DARMIN.

What! Bartolin the cashier?

BLANDFORD.

The same; a good friend, who esteems me, and whom I love.

DARMIN.

[*In an ironical tone.*

To be sure you have made an excellent choice, and are extremely happy in a mistress and a friend: not at all prejudiced.

BLANDFORD.

Not in the least: I am impatient at their absence, and long to see them.

ADINE.

[*Aside.*

I can bear it no longer: I must go.

BLANDFORD.

You seem disordered.

ADINE.

Everyone has some misfortunes or other; mine are heavy indeed, they overpower me, but they will cease—with Blandford's.

[*She goes out.*

BLANDFORD.

I know not why, but this grief affects me.

DARMIN.

'Tis an amiable youth, and seems wonderfully attached to you.

BLANDFORD.

Blandford's heart is not a bad one, and what fortune I have, howsoever small it be, shall be in common with us both; as soon as Dorfise returns me the money I left with her, your young Adine shall

have a part of it: I wish his voice was a little more masculine, and his air more easy: but time and care must form the manners of youth: he is modest, sensible, and has just notions of right and wrong. I observed through the whole voyage, that he would blush at any indecent expression which my people made use of on board: I promise you I shall endeavor to be a father to him.

DARMIN.

That's not what he wants of you; but come, let us go immediately to Dorfise, at least we shall get your money of her.

BLANDFORD.

True; but that unlucky demon which always accompanies me, has contrived to keep her in the country still.

DARMIN.

Well, but the cashier—

BLANDFORD.

The cashier is there, too; but they will both come to town as soon as they know I am here.

DARMIN.

You are satisfied then that Mme. Dorfise is always devoted to your service.

BLANDFORD.

Why should she not be? if I keep my faith to her, surely she may do the same by me; I have not been so foolish, as, like you, to throw away my heart on a gay coquette.

DARMIN.

It may happen that I shall find myself despised, but that you know every man is liable to; I will own

to you, her airy, trifling humor is very different from that of her wise cousin.

BLANDFORD.

But what will you do with a heart so—

DARMIN.

Nothing at all: I shall hold my tongue, till our two fair idols make their appearance at Marseilles: apropos, here comes our friend Mondor.

BLANDFORD.

Our friend? said you! he our friend?

DARMIN.

His head no doubt is a little of the lightest, but at the bottom he is a worthy character.

BLANDFORD.

Prithee, undeceive thyself, dear Darmin, and be assured that friendship requires a firmer mind than his; fools are incapable of love.

DARMIN.

But the wise man, does he love so much then? come, we may reap some advantage from this fool notwithstanding; as the case now stands with us, there will be no harm in borrowing his money.

SCENE III.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, MONDOR.

MONDOR.

Morrow, morrow, my dears; so you are still in the land of the living: I'm glad of it, glad of it, with

all my heart: good morrow to you; but pray, who is that pretty boy I saw in t'other room? whence comes he? did he come over with you? what is he, Turk, Greek, your son, your page, what do you do with him? where do you sup to-night, ha? boys, where do you throw your handkerchiefs? what! are you going post to Versailles to give an account of your battles? have you got ever a patron here?

BLANDFORD.

No.

MONDOR.

What, never made your bows at court?

BLANDFORD.

No: I made my bows at sea; my services are my patrons; the only artifices I make use of; I never was at court in my life.

MONDOR.

Then you never got anything.

BLANDFORD.

I never asked it; I wait till the master's eye in its own time shall find me out.

MONDOR.

Yes: and these fine sentiments will carry you, as they do everybody else, at their own time, to jail.

DARMIN.

We are pretty near it already, for our honor and glory has not left us a shilling.

MONDOR.

I am inclined to think so.

DARMIN.

Dear knight, let us fairly confess to you—

MONDOR.

In two words I must inform you—

DARMIN.

That our friend here has had a terrible loss—

MONDOR.

That I have made, my dear, a discovery—

DARMIN.

Of all his fortune—

MONDOR.

Of a famous beauty—

DARMIN.

Which he was carrying—

MONDOR.

To whom without vanity—

DARMIN.

By sea—

MONDOR.

After a good deal of mysterious conduct—

DARMIN.

In his ship—

MONDOR.

I have the happiness to be well with.

DARMIN.

This, sir, is a misfortune—

MONDOR.

O 'tis a most enchanting pleasure to conquer these excessive scruples, to get the better of that modesty, that fierce angry preceptor who is always thwarting and scolding at nature: I had once an inclination for Lady Burlet, for her gayety, and those pretty light airs she gives herself; but that was a foolish taste, as foolish as herself.

DARMIN.

I'm glad to hear it.

MONDOR.

O no, 'tis the prude I dote on: encouraged by the difficulty, I presented my apple to the beauty.

DARMIN.

Ay, sir, this prude, who has captivated your heart, this proud beauty is—

MONDOR.

Dorfise.

BLANDFORD.

[*Laughing.*

Dorfise! is it? O you know, I suppose, whom you are speaking to?

MONDOR.

To you, my friend.

BLANDFORD.

I pity thy folly, young man, and shall take care that, for the future, this lady shall never encourage such sparks as you.

MONDOR.

Very well, my dear: but let me tell you——your wise woman never complains when she is taken by a fool.

BLANDFORD.

Be so kind, however, my friend, as to play the fool no longer with her, for know, her virtues are destined to make me happy; she is mine, and has promised to marry me; she waits with impatience till we are united.

MONDOR.

[*Laughing.*

The pretty note that my friend, Blandford, has there! [*To Darmin*] you say he wants a few more in his distress; here, Darmin.

[*He is going to give him a pocketbook.*

BLANDFORD.

[*Stopping Darmin.*

Stay, take care, Darmin.

DARMIN.

Why, you would not—

BLANDFORD.

From him I would not—receive anything; when I do any man the favor to borrow of him, it shall be one whom I think worthy of it; it shall be a friend.

MONDOR.

And am not I your friend?

BLANDFORD.

No, sir: a friend indeed? an excellent friend who wants to run away with my wife; a friend who this very night perhaps would entertain twenty coxcombs at my expense: O I know them well; these fashionable friends, these friends of the world.

MONDOR.

That world, sir, which you grumble at, is better than all your ill-humor. Your servant, sir. I am going this moment to the fair Dorfise, to split my sides with laughing at your folly.

[*Is going off.*

BLANDFORD.

[*Stopping him.*

What say you, sir? Darmin, how is this? can Dorfise be here?

MONDOR.

Most assuredly.

BLANDFORD.

O heaven!

MONDOR.

And pray what is there in that so wonderful?

BLANDFORD

In her own house?

MONDOR.

Yes, I tell you, at Marseilles; I met her just as I came in, returning in a violent hurry from the country.

BLANDFORD.

[*Aside.*

To meet me! thank heaven! now all my sorrows are past: come, I'll go, and see her.

MONDOR.

Done: with all my heart: the more fools there are, the more one laughs.

BLANDFORD.

[*Going to the door.*

I'll rap.

MONDOR.

Rap away.

COLLETTE.

[*In the house.*

Who's there?

BLANDFORD.

'Tis I.

MONDOR.

'Tis I myself.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN, COLLETTE, MONDOR.

COLLETTE.

[*Coming out of the house.*

Blandford! Darmin! amazing: lord, sir——

BLANDFORD.

Collette!

COLLETTE.

Bless me, sir, I thought you had been drowned long ago; you're welcome, sir.

BLANDFORD.

No, Collette; just heaven, propitious to my love, preserved me, that I might once more see thy dear mistress.

COLLETTE.

She is this moment gone out, sir.

DARMIN.

And her cousin, too?

COLLETTE.

Yes, sir, her cousin has gone along with her.

BLANDFORD.

But where, for heaven's sake, is she gone? where must I find her?

COLLETTE.

[*Making a prudish curtsy.*

At the—assembly.

BLANDFORD.

What assembly?

COLLETTE.

Lord, sir, you are mighty ignorant: you must know, sir, there are about twenty ladies of fashion most intimately connected to reform the age, to correct our foolish young women, to substitute in the room of that scandal which now prevails a prudent modesty and reserve, and Mme. Dorfise is at the head of the party.

BLANDFORD.

[*To Darmin.*

But how happens it, Darmin, that such a coxcomb as this should be suffered by so rigid, so severe a beauty?

DARMIN.

O prudes love coxcombs.

BLANDFORD.

Where does she go from the assembly?

COLLETTE.

That I can't tell: to do good in secret, I suppose.

BLANDFORD.

Secretly! that's the height of virtue; but when may I, in my turn, speak with her at home?

MONDOR.

That, sir, you must ask me; and I believe I may venture to grant it you: you may see her, sir, as you used to do.

BLANDFORD.

Your business, sir, is to respect her, and take care that you say nothing to her prejudice.

DARMIN.

And her cousin, too, pray where is she to be found? I was told they lived together.

COLLETTE.

They do so: but their tastes are different, and they are seldom together. Mme. de Burlet, with ten or a dozen young fellows, and as many pretty women, entertains herself every day, keeps a plentiful table, and goes forever to the comedy: afterwards they dance, or play; always at her house you will meet with good suppers, new songs, and bons-mots, old wines red and white, ice-cream, liquors, new ribbons, Saxon monkeys, rich bagatelles, invented by Hebert for the use of the fine ladies day and night, pleasures succeeding pleasures; scarce is there a moment left even to scandalize one another.

MONDOR.

Ay, this, my friend, is the way to live.

DARMIN.

But whither must I follow her?

COLLETTE.

Everywhere; for she runs about from morning to night, and sees everything; plays, balls, music,

suppers; she is always employed: perhaps very late in the evening you may meet with her and her joyous companions at home, about supper-time.

BLANDFORD.

If, after what I have heard, you are fond of her, my friend, you must have as little understanding as herself; is it possible to love a woman, who has all the follies of her sex put together? to be sure, it will be worth your while to follow her chariot wheels, to dance after a coquette, and sigh and whine for a ridiculous creature who thinks of nothing but her pleasures.

DARMIN.

I may be mistaken, but I cannot help thinking that a love of pleasure, and the strictest honor, may be consistent with each other; and I am likewise of opinion, with all due deference to you be it spoken, that a prude, with all her severity of virtue, may do a great deal of good in public, and yet in secret is often good for—just nothing.

BLANDFORD.

Well, well! we shall be better judges by and by; you shall see my choice, and I yours.

MONDOR.

Ay, ay, by the time you return, my dears, the place will be taken.

BLANDFORD.

By whom, pray?

MONDOR.

By me.

BLANDFORD.

By you?

MONDOR.

I have made too good use of your absence to be afraid of your presence, I assure you: so fare you well.

SCENE V.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN.

BLANDFORD.

Well, what think you? can one be jealous of such a creature?

DARMIN.

O fools have fortune, you know: nothing more common.

BLANDFORD.

You can never imagine, surely—

DARMIN.

O yes: your sensible women are very fond of fools at times: but I must take my leave, to know my own fate, and see whether I am a happy or a forsaken lover.

[*He goes out.*

BLANDFORD.

[*Alone.*

Ay, ay, make haste, and get your dismissal: poor fellow! I pity him: how happy am I to have made choice of a woman worthy of my esteem! unfortunate as I have been, I have reason to bless the hour of my return: reason increases my passion: yes: I am resolved; I will leave the world, the whole ungrateful world, for one good and worthy woman. I have had enough of hopes and fears: the port at

length appears, and there will I shelter myself: what is all the world to this? a foolish, ridiculous, fatal world! ought I not to detest it? there is not a friend remaining in it; not a creature, who at the bottom really cares a farthing for one: O 'tis a vile world: if there is any love or affection to be expected, it must be from a wife; all the difficulty is how to choose one. A coquette is a monster one would avoid, but a beautiful, a tender, and a sensible woman, is the noblest work of nature.

End of the First Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

DORFISE, MME. DE BURLET, MONDOR.

DORFISE.

I must beg of you, M. Mondor, not to indulge yourself in this excessive familiarity: it is impossible for ears so chaste as mine to suffer such liberties.

MONDOR.

[*Laughing.*

And yet you like them: you rate me for my impertinence, but you listen to it: why, my dear, your hair is cut short on purpose, that you may hear the better.

DORFISE.

Again?

MME. DE BURLET.

Indeed I shall take his part: you are too rigid, and affect too much severity: liberty is not always licentiousness; there is nothing indecent, in my opinion,

in little sallies of innocent mirth and gayety, which we may choose whether we will understand or not; but your outrageous virtue would shut up our mouths and our ears together.

DORFISE.

I would indeed, cousin: and moreover, I would advise you to shut your doors, too, against some visitors whom I frequently see here; I have told you often enough, cousin, it will ruin your reputation: how can you suffer such a libertine crew? Cleon, that pretty fellow, who is very brilliant without a spark of wit, and is always laughing at the good things he would make you believe he has just said; Damon, who for twenty beauties that he is in love with, makes twenty madrigals as insipid as himself; and that Robin, who is always talking of himself, with the old pedant that makes every creature sick of him: then there's my cousin, too, that—

MONDOR.

Enough, enough, madam: let everybody speak in his turn; and since your ladyship shows so much good nature in speaking of the world, I will endeavor to convince you I have at least as much charity as yourself, and propose giving you in three words a picture of the whole city: to begin then with—

DORFISE.

Stop thy licentious tongue: none should dare to chastise vice but persons of the strictest virtue; I cannot bear to hear libertines satirizing others who are much less culpable than themselves; for my part, what I say is from my regard to the honor of human nature, and disgust of the world, this vile world: how I do hate it!

MME. DE BURLET.

For all that, cousin, it has some attractions.

DORFISE.

For you, I believe it has, and to your ruin.

MME. DE BURLET.

And has it none for you, cousin? do you really hate the world?

DORFISE.

Horribly.

MME. DE BURLET.

And all the pleasures of it?

DORFISE.

Abominably.

MME. DE BURLET.

Plays? balls?

MONDOR.

Music, dancing—

DORFISE.

O my dear, they are all the devil's inventions.

MME. DE BURLET.

But dress and finery? you must acknowledge——

DORFISE.

All vanity! O how I regret every minute thrown away at my toilette! I hate to look at myself; and, of all things in nature, detest a looking-glass.

MME. DE BURLET.

And yet, my dear rigid cousin, you seem tolerably well dressed.

DORFISE.

Do I?

MONDOR.

Extremely well.

DORFISE.

Plain, very plain.

MONDOR.

But with taste.

MME. DE BURLET.

You may say what you please, but your wise ladyship loves to please.

DORFISE.

I love to please? O heaven!

MME. DE BURLET.

Come, come, be honest; have you not some small inclination to this young rattle? he's not ill made.

[*Pointing to Mondor.*

MONDOR.

O fie!

MME. DE BURLET.

Young, rich, and handsome.

MONDOR.

Pooh, prithee.

DORFISE.

O abominable! a handsome young man is my aversion; handsome and young! O fie, fie!

MONDOR.

Upon my soul, madam, I am concerned for both of us; the wicked woman to talk so: but pray, madam, this Blandford, who is come back without his ship, is he so rich, and young, and handsome?

DORFISE.

Blandford? why, is he here?

MONDOR.

Certainly.

COLLETTE.

[*Entering hastily.*

O madam! I come to tell you—

DORFISE.

[*Whispering to Collette.*

Hark'ee.

MME. DE BURLET.

How's this?

DORFISE.

[*To Mondor.*

I thought since he took his leave of me he had been cured of all his faults; to tell you the truth, I imagined he was dead long ago.

MONDOR.

No, madam, he is alive, I assure you: the pirate intends to sink me at once: he pretends to be a favorite of yours.

DORFISE.

[*Aside to Collette.*

O Collette!

COLLETTE.

O madam!

DORFISE.

[*To Mondor.*

Dear sir, can't you find out some means of sending him to sea again?

MONDOR.

O yes: with all my heart.

MME. DE BURLET.

Pray, sir, is there any news of his intimate friend and confidant, Darmin? has he arrived?

MONDOR.

He has, madam: the captain it seems fell in with him at some port or other: they have had a battle at sea, and now are returned home without a stiver; Blandford has brought with him a little Greek, too, the handsomest, genteelest—

DORFISE.

O yes: I believe I saw him just by my house: large black eyes?

MONDOR.

The same.

DORFISE.

Penetrating, yet full of softness: rosy cheeks?

MONDOR.

He has so.

DORFISE.

Fine hair, and teeth: something in his air that's noble and fine?

MONDOR.

The very paragon of nature.

DORFISE.

If his morals are good; if he is well-born and discreet, I'll see him: you shall bring him to me—though he is young.

MME. DE BURLET.

I must find out Darmin's lodging as soon as possible: here, la Fleur, go this minute and carry him

these five hundred pounds, [*she gives a purse to la Fleur*] and tell him I expect Blandford and him to supper with me: our friends have long wished for his return, and none more than myself; never did I know a better creature, more honest, or ingenuous: I admire above all things his amiable complacency, and those social virtues that so strongly recommend him.

DORFISE.

Blandford is not of his disposition: he is so serious.

MONDOR.

So full of spleen!

DORFISE.

True, and so jealous!

MONDOR.

So affronting!

DORFISE.

He is—

MONDOR.

Very true.

DORFISE.

Let me speak, sir; I say he is—

MONDOR.

Yes, madam, I attend to you—he is—

DORFISE.

He is in short a dangerous man.

MME. DE BURLET.

They tell me he has fought nobly for his king and country, and distinguished himself greatly at sea.

DORFISE.

That may be, cousin, but by land he is dreadfully troublesome.

MONDOR.

And besides he is—

DORFISE.

True.

MONDOR.

O those sailors have all of them such horrid principles.

DORFISE.

They have so.

MME. DE BURLET.

But I have heard, cousin, that you formerly gave him some hopes—

DORFISE.

Yes: but since that I have taken an antipathy to the whole world, and quitted it: I began with him; 'twas he and the world together that have made me so fearful.

SCENE II.

DORFISE, MME. DE BURLET, MONDOR, COLLETTE.

COLLETTE.

Madam!

DORFISE.

Well!

COLLETTE.

M. Blandford has come.

DORFISE.

O heaven!

MME. DE BURLET.

Is Darmin with him?

COLLETTE.

Yes, madam.

MME. DE BURLET.

I am heartily glad of it.

DORFISE.

And I'm heartily sorry; I must retire; I would fly from the whole world.

MONDOR.

With me, I hope.

DORFISE.

No, sir, if you please, without you.

[*She goes out.*

SCENE III.

MME. DE BURLET, BLANDFORD, DARMIN, MONDOR, ADINE.

DARMIN.

[*To Mme. de Burlet.*

Permit me, madam, at length on my knees—

MME. DE BURLET.

[*Running up to Darmin.*

O my dear Darmin, come along, I've made an engagement for you to go to the ball when the comedy

is over: we'll prate as we go along; my chariot's below.

[*To Blandford.*

And you, M. Solemnity, will you come with us?

BLANDFORD.

No: I came here, madam, on a serious affair: away, ye train of triflers, go, and pretend to pleasures which you never enjoy; go, and be weary of one another as soon as you can: you and I [*turning to Adine*] will go in search of Dorfise.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, ADINE, COLLETTE.

BLANDFORD.

Then we shall see a woman indeed; a woman submitting to every duty of life; a woman who for me has renounced the whole world; and who to her faithful passion joins the most scrupulous and rigid virtue: I hope you will endeavor to recommend yourself to her.

ADINE.

Of that, sir, you may assure yourself; I shall try to imitate her virtues; her example may be the best instruction to me.

BLANDFORD.

I'm glad to hear you think so: I'll introduce you to her: from this time forward I shall look upon you, Adine, as a son whom fortune has thrown in my way, to make amends for all her past unkindness; it is impossible to know without loving thee;

your disposition is only too pliant and flexible; nothing therefore can be of more service to you than to keep company with a prudent and discreet woman, whose acquaintance will improve the goodness of your heart, and confirm you in your honesty, and love of justice, without depriving you at the same time of that sweetness and complacency which I own I find myself deficient in: a woman of sense and beauty, who has nothing trifling or ridiculous in her, is an excellent school for a young fellow at your time of life; it will form your mind, and direct your heart; her house is the temple of honor.

ADINE.

The sooner we visit it then the better; but her example is so uncommon, I fear I shall never be able to follow it.

BLANDFORD.

Why not?

ADINE.

Because I like yours better: there is something in your virtue, though the external appearance has too much severity in it, that charms me: it must, I am sure, be good at the bottom: you have always been my favorite, but for Dorfise—

BLANDFORD.

[*Going towards the door of Dorfise's house.*

You must not indeed flatter yourself that you can at once be able to imitate her; but in time you may: however, let me advise you to see Dorfise, and to avoid her cousin.

[*He is going in, Collette comes out, stops him, and shuts the door; he knocks at it.*

COLLETTE.

You must not go in, sir.

BLANDFORD.

Not I?

COLLETTE.

No, sir.

BLANDFORD.

How's this, Blandford refused admittance?

COLLETTE.

My mistress, sir, is retired to her apartment, and would be private.

BLANDFORD.

I admire her delicacy, but I must go in.

COLLETTE.

Pray hear me, sir.

BLANDFORD.

Not I: I will go in, and this minute too.

[*He goes in.*

COLLETTE.

Stay, sir.

ADINE.

I'll follow him and see the event of this strange interview.

SCENE V.

COLLETTE.

[*Alone.*

Now will he see her, and discover all: I'm frightened to death about it: 'twill be all over now with

my poor mistress: what a foolish woman! to stipulate this secret marriage, and give herself to such a fellow as Bartolin: what will the malicious world say? well; women are strange creatures, that's the truth of it: nay, and so are the men too: what excessive weakness! to be sure my mistress is a fool; she deceives herself and everybody else; and half her time is employed in finding out artifices to hide her indiscretion, and repair her reputation. She follows her inclination, and then has recourse to intrigue and management, and yet she takes no care of the main point: this is a cursed adventure for us, and a most unfortunate return: how will Blandford take the injury she has done him? here have we no less than three husbands in the house, two of them promised, and the other, I believe, absolutely taken: a woman in such a case must be a little hampered.

SCENE VI.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

COLLETTE.

O madam, what's to be done?

DORFISE.

Fear nothing; there are ways and means to dazzle people's eyes, to delay, and put off matters; men are easily managed, their weakness is our strength, and helps our designs against them: I have got myself out of the worst scrape: our disagreeable interview is over—and I have sent the good man—God speed him—into the country to his old crony Bartolin, who may lend him some money; at least I shall gain time by it, and that's enough.

COLLETTE.

But surely, madam, the deuce was in you to sign that plagued contract! what had you to do with Bartolin?

DORFISE.

The devil, my dear, is full of spite, that's certain: that fellow persecuted me so: but we tempt, and are tempted, and the heart easily surrenders: you know we heard that Blandford would never come back again.

COLLETTE.

That he was dead.

DORFISE.

I was left without any support, money or friends, and weak withal: all owing to the weakness of my sex, Collette; but our stars will prevail: 'tis often the lot of a beauty to marry a scab: my heart was severely attacked.

COLLETTE.

There are certain seasons very dangerous to a prude: but if you must sacrifice to love, you should have taken the chevalier, he is handsome.

DORFISE.

O but I wanted a bit of intrigue and mystery, besides I am not fond of his character: but he is useful to me: he is my puffer, my emissary: he's a prate-apace you know, and can scatter reports about town for me that may be serviceable.

COLLETTE.

But Bartolin is such a villain.

DORFISE.

Yes, but—

COLLETTE.

And for his wit, I'm sure there are no charms in that.

DORFISE.

No: but—

COLLETTE.

But what?

DORFISE.

Fate, whim, caprice, my unhappy circumstances, a little avarice withal, and then opportunity—in short, I surrendered, played the fool, and signed the contract. I kept, you know, Blandford's strong box, and after he was gone, gave away a little of his money for him—out of charity: who would ever have thought, that, after two years, he should be constant to his old flame, and come back again to look for his wife and his strong box?

COLLETTE.

Everybody here said he was dead, and now he is not; the fellow's a fool, and stands in his own light.

DORFISE.

[*Resuming the Prude.*

Well, since the man's alive, I must give him his jewels back: let him take them: but Bartolin has got them to keep for me; he fancies they are mine, holds them fast, and is fond of them and as jealous as he is of me.

COLLETTE.

So I suppose.

DORFISE.

Husbands, jewels, virtue, and character, how to reconcile you all, heaven knows!

SCENE VII.

MONDOR, ADINE, DORFISE.

MONDOR.

I must drive away this powerful rival, who gives himself such airs, and despises me; positively must.

ADINE. [*Coming in slowly.*

What's this? I'll listen a little.

MONDOR.

In short, I must make myself happy, and punish his insolence: 'tis you, 'tis Dorfise alone whom I adore: let old Darmin enjoy his little coquette, they are not worth our notice: but Blandford, the severe and virtuous Blandford, there I own I could wish to triumph: he thinks you can refuse him nothing, because he is a man of honor and virtue: now to me these are the most disagreeable creatures in the universe; indeed, my queen, you'll soon be heartily tired of him.

DORFISE.

[*Prudishly, after looking steadfastly at Adine.*

You are mistaken, sir: I have the highest respect and esteem for M. Blandford.

MONDOR.

There are those, madam, whom one may esteem, and yet laugh at, and make fools of: is it not so?

ADINE. [*Aside.*

Amazing! she is constant and virtuous: doubtless she loves him: I am confounded: who would have thought it?

DORFISE.

What is he talking of?

ADINE.

[*Aside.*

Dorfise is faithful, and, to complete my misery, she is handsome.

DORFISE.

[*To Mondor, after looking tenderly at Adine.*

He says, I am handsome.

MONDOR.

There he's right: but he begins to be troublesome: hark'ee, child, I have something to say to this lady in private.

ADINE.

I will retire, sir.

DORFISE.

[*To Mondor.*

I say, sir, you are greatly mistaken.

[*To Adine.*

Stay you here, my dear.

[*To Mondor.*

How dare you, sir, send him away?

[*To Adine.*

Come hither, child: he's almost ready to weep; the sweet boy! he shall stay with me: Blandford brought him to me; and from the first moment I took a fancy to him: I like his disposition.

MONDOR.

O let his disposition alone, for heaven's sake, and attend to me: this Blandford, madam, I know you hate him: you have often told me he is brutal, jealous—

DORFISE.

[*Angrily.*

Never, sir.

[*To Adine.*

What age are you?

ADINE.

Eighteen, madam.

DORFISE.

Such tender youth as thine requires the curb of wisdom to guide and direct it: vice is bewitching, temptations frequent, and example dangerous: a single glance may be your ruin; be upon your guard against women, nay, and against yourself, and dread the poisonous blast that withers the sweet flower of virtue.

MONDOR.

Prithee, Dorfise, let the boy's flower alone: what is it to you whether it be withered or not? mind me, my dear.

DORFISE.

My God! his innocence is so engaging!

MONDOR.

'Tis a mere child.

DORFISE.

[*Coming up to Adine.*

What's your name, my dear, and whence come you?

ADINE.

My name, madam, is Adine; I was born in Greece: M. Blandford brought me over with Darmin.

DORFISE.

'Twas kindly done of him.

MONDOR.

What a ridiculous curiosity! here I am making strong love to you, and you all the while talking to a child.

DORFISE.

[*Softly.*

Be quiet, you blockhead!

SCENE VIII.

DORFISE, MONDOR, ADINE, COLLETTE.

COLLETTE.

Madam.

DORFISE.

Well!

COLLETTE.

They wait for you at the assembly.

DORFISE.

Well: I shall be there presently.

MONDOR.

Hang your engagement: I tell you what, my dear; you and I will put an end to these prudish meetings, these conspiracies against love, taste, and gayety: upon my word, child, it does not become a beautiful young creature, as you are, to go about declaring against everything that's joyous, amongst a parcel of toothless old beldames, that meet together in their gloomy vaults to weep over the pleasures of the living: but I'll go and rout these immortal tattlers, and stop their clack with a hundred bon-mots.

DORFISE.

For heaven's sake, don't go and expose me there, I desire you; positively you shall not.

MONDOR.

Positively I will, this minute, and tell them you are coming.

[*He goes out.*

DORFISE.

The wild creature!

[*To Adine.*

Avoid, my dear, whatever you do, such fools as these: be prudent, and discreet: make my compliments to Blandford—what a piercing eye!

ADINE.

[*Turning back.*

Did you speak, madam?

DORFISE.

That sweet complexion! that ingenuous look! so charming! so modest!—I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you often.

ADINE.

I shall pay my respects, madam, with the greatest pleasure: madam, your servant.

DORFISE.

Adieu, my dear child.

ADINE.

I don't know what to think of it: I can't discover whether she deceives him or not; all I know is, I love him.

SCENE IX.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

[*Looking after Adine.*

What said he? I love! love whom? perhaps the boy has fallen in love with me; he talks to himself, stops, and looks at me; I have certainly turned his brain.

COLLETTE.

He ogles you most wonderfully, and looks with such tenderness.

DORFISE.

Is that my fault, Collette? how can I possibly help it?

COLLETTE.

Very true, madam: but danger approaches: I am terribly afraid of this Blandford's coming back again, and dread still more the savage resentment of Bartolin.

DORFISE.

[*Sighing.*

This young Turk's mighty handsome! do you think he is a Turk? that an infidel can have such softness in his manner, so fine a figure? I fancy I could convert him.

COLLETTE.

I'll tell you what I fancy: that when it is discovered you are married to Bartolin, your reputation will be severely handled: Blandford will storm

dreadfully, and your little Turk will be of no great service to you.

DORFISE.

Never do you fear.

COLLETTE.

I have long, madam, relied on your prudence: but Bartolin is a jealous brute, and what's worse, he is —your husband: 'tis really a melancholy case, and indeed rather singular: the two rivals, I am afraid, will be very intractable.

DORFISE.

O I can avoid them both: peace is the object of my wishes: it is my duty and my interest to foresee and prevent the ill consequences of a discovery; I have friends, men of merit and fortune.

COLLETTE.

Take their advice.

DORFISE.

I intend to, immediately.

COLLETTE.

But whose?

DORFISE.

Why, let me see—suppose I ask this stranger—this little—

COLLETTE.

Ask his advice? the advice of a beardless boy?

DORFISE.

He seems to be very sensible, and if he is, why not consult him? let me tell you, young people are the best counsellors in things of this kind: he might

throw some light on my affairs; besides, he is Blandford's friend, and I must talk with him.

COLLETTE.

O to be sure, madam, 'tis quite necessary.

DORFISE.

And as one talks over such things better at table, it would not be amiss to ask him to dinner: what think you?

COLLETTE.

Softly there, madam: excuse me, but you who are so afraid of scandal—

DORFISE.

I am afraid of nothing: I know what I am about: when once a reputation is established, we may be perfectly easy about it: all the party will defend us, and cry out on our side.

COLLETTE.

Ay, but the world will talk, madam.

DORFISE.

Well! for once we'll submit to the wicked world: I'll give up this innocent dinner, and not sharpen their malicious tongues: I'll talk no more with Adine, never see him again; and yet, after all, what could they say of a child? but to chastity and virtue I will add the appearance of them also; will observe decency and decorum: I'll do it in my cousin's name, and beg her—

COLLETTE.

An excellent contrivance! a woman of the world has no reputation to lose; one may put her name to

ten billets-doux; she may have as many lovers, as many assignations as she pleases: nobody's offended, nobody blushes, nobody's surprised: but if, perchance, a lady of honor makes a false step, it must be carefully concealed.

DORFISE.

A false step! I make a false step! thank heaven! I have nothing to reproach myself with: to be sure, I have signed, but I am not yet absolute Mme. Bartolin: he has a claim, and that's all; and perhaps I may find a method to get rid of my master: I have an excellent design in my head: if this handsome Turk has any inclination to me, I am satisfied everything will go well; I am yet mistress of myself, and can terminate all happily: go you, and ask him to dinner: is there any harm in having an agreeable young fellow at one's table, and one that can give good advice, too?

COLLETTE.

O excellent advice! nothing can be more proper: let us immediately set about this charitable work.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

Is it not he? how uneasy I am! hark! somebody knocks; he's come: Collette, hullo! Collette: 'tis he.

COLLETTE.

No, madam, 'tis the chevalier; that impertinent coxcomb, who runs in and out, skips, laughs, prates, and flutters about perpetually; he swears he will have a tête-à-tête with you; and at last, between jest and earnest, I have driven him away.

DORFISE.

O send him to my cousin: I hate their insipid parties, their ridiculous prating and nonsense: dear Collette, preserve me from them.

COLLETTE.

Hush! hush! I hear somebody coming.

DORFISE.

O 'tis my sweet Greek.

COLLETTE.

'Tis he, I believe.

SCENE II.

DORFISE, ADINE.

DORFISE.

Pray come in: good morrow to you, sir: how I tremble! pray, sir, be seated.

ADINE.

I'm quite confounded—I beg pardon, madam, I believe, another—

DORFISE.

Be not alarmed, sir: I am that other: my cousin dines abroad to-day with Blandford: you must supply his place, and stay with me.

ADINE.

Supply his place, madam! who can do that? what passion can equal his, or who can exceed him in virtue, honor, and nobleness of soul?

DORFISE.

You talk of him with warmth; your friendship has life and spirit in it: I admire you for it.

ADINE.

'Tis a sincere regard, but an unhappy one.

DORFISE.

Tenderness is to the last degree becoming in youth like thine; virtue is nothing, if it is not linked by the sacred bonds of friendship.

ADINE.

Alas! if a natural sensibility is the infallible mark of virtue, without vanity, I may boast some degree of worth and honesty.

DORFISE.

A soul so noble deserves to be cultivated and improved; perhaps I was born to be the happy instrument; many a woman has long wished in vain to find a tender friend, lively, yet discreet, who possessed all the graces of youth without its flighty extravagance; and, if I am not deceived, in thee all those qualities are united: indeed they are: what lucky star conducted thee to Marseilles?

ADINE.

I was in Greece, and the brave Blandford brought me from thence; I have told you so twice already.

DORFISE.

Suppose you have, I could hear it again and again: but tell me, why is that fair forehead wrapped up in a turban? are you really a Turk?

ADINE.

Greece is my country.

DORFISE.

Who would have thought it? Is Greece in Turkey then? O how I should like to talk Greek with you! why you have all the sprightliness, all the natural ease of a true Frenchman: surely nature mistook when she made you a Greek: well, I bless Providence for throwing you thus amongst us.

ADINE.

Here I am, to my sorrow.

DORFISE.

And canst thou be unhappy?

ADINE.

Indeed I am so: but 'tis the fault of my own heart.

DORFISE.

Ay: 'tis the heart that does all the good and all the evil in this world: 'tis that which makes us both miserable: have you any engagement then?

ADINE.

I have, indeed: a base intriguing woman has betrayed me: her heart, like her face, is painted and disguised: she is bold, haughty, and full of artifice; more dangerous, because she hides her vices beneath the mask of virtue: how cruel is it that so false a heart should govern one who is but too honest!

DORFISE.

Some faithless woman! let us be revenged on her: who is she? of what rank? what country? what is her name?

ADINE.

That I must not tell you.

DORFISE.

Why so? I fear you have art, too, the art of concealment: O you have every talent to please and to delight, young and discreet, beautiful and sensible: but I will explain myself: if, to make you amends for all the injuries you have received, you should meet with a woman rich, amiable, admired, and esteemed; one who had a heart constant, firm, and hitherto untouched, such as is seldom to be met with in Turkey, and more seldom perhaps in this country; if such a one could be found, tell me, sweet youth, what think you? what would you say to her?

ADINE.

I would say—she meant but to deceive me.

DORFISE.

Nay, that would be carrying your distrust too far: come, come, be more confident.

ADINE.

Forgive me, madam; but the unfortunate, you know, are always a little suspicious.

DORFISE.

And what, for example, may your suspicions be whilst I am talking to and looking at you?

ADINE.

My suspicions are that you mean to try me.

DORFISE.

O the malicious little rogue! how cunning he is with that air of innocence: 'tis love himself just out of his childhood: get you gone: I am in absolute danger: positively I'll see you no more.

ADINE.

Since 'tis your order, madam, I take my leave.

DORFISE.

But you need not be in such a hurry to obey: come back, come back, I esteem you too much to be angry with you; but don't abuse my esteem, my sincere regard.

ADINE.

But you esteem Blandford: can one esteem two at the same time?

DORFISE.

O no, never: the laws of reason and of love allow succession, but not division: you'll learn a great deal by living with me, child.

ADINE.

I have learned a great deal by what I see already.

DORFISE.

When heaven, my dear, makes a fine woman, it always at the same time forms a man on purpose for her: we go in search of each other for a long time, and make twenty choices before we fix on the right; we are always looking as it were for our counterpart, and seldom, very seldom, meet with it—by a secret instinct we fly after true happiness; and she [*looking tenderly at him*] who finds you, need look no further.

ADINE.

If you knew what I really am, you would soon change your opinion of me.

DORFISE.

Never.

ADINE.

If once you knew me, I'm sure you would think me unworthy of your care: we should both be caught in the same snare.

DORFISE.

Caught, my dear, what can you mean? we're interrupted: O 'tis you, Collette.

SCENE III.

COLLETTE, DORFISE, ADINE.

COLLETTE.

[*In a violent flurry.*

Ay, madam, I could not help it; but there's a more impertinent visitor still coming; M. Bartolin.

DORFISE.

Indeed! I did not expect him till to-morrow: the villain has deceived me: returned already!

COLLETTE.

Ay, madam, and here's another unlucky accident: the chevalier, that king of coxcombs, not knowing the master of the house, is disputing with him in the street, and keeps him there in spite of his teeth.

DORFISE.

So much the better.

COLLETTE.

No, madam, so much the worse: for this blunderer, not knowing whom he is talking to, laughs in his face, insists upon it that nobody shall come in here to-day; that everybody shall be excluded as well as himself; that he's an impertinent rascal, and that you were engaged in your own apartment in a sober tête-à-tête with a pretty young fellow. Bartolin swears in wrath that he'll break the door down: Mondor splits his sides with laughing, and the other bursts with spleen.

DORFISE.

And I in the meantime am dying with fear. O Collette, what shall I do? at what hole shall we creep out?

ADINE.

What can this mystery be?

DORFISE.

The mystery is, that we are both undone: Collette, where are you going?

ADINE.

What will become of me?

DORFISE.

[*To Collette.*

Hark'ee: stay: what a time was this for him to return! [*to Adine*] you must hide yourself for to-night in this closet: you'll find a black sack there, wrap yourself up in it, and be quiet. My God! it is he, that's certain.

ADINE.

[*Going into the closet.*

O love, what do I suffer for thee!

DORFISE.

Poor lad! he's desperately fond of me.

COLLETTE.

Hush! hush! here he comes, your dear spouse.

SCENE IV.

BARTOLIN, DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

[*Meeting Bartolin.*

My dear sir, heaven be with you! how late you are: you made me so uneasy, I was ready to die with fretting.

BARTOLIN.

Mondor told me quite another story.

DORFISE.

It's all a lie, every syllable he says, a horrid lie: I think I ought to be believed first; you know I'm sincere: the fellow loves me to madness, and is piqued at my refusal of him: his eternal clack teases me to death: I will positively never see him again.

BARTOLIN.

He seemed to me to talk rationally enough.

DORFISE.

Don't believe a word he says.

BARTOLIN.

Well, well, I shan't mind him: I only came to finish our affairs, and to take some necessaries here out of the closet.

DORFISE.

[*In a persuasive tone.*

What are you doing there now? come, don't go into a body's closet.

BARTOLIN.

Why not?

DORFISE.

[*After pausing a little.*

Why, do you know, I had the same thought as you, and have just been putting my papers in order there, so I sent for our old advocate, and we were consulting together, when he was taken with a sudden weakness.

BARTOLIN.

O nothing but old age, he's very old.

COLLETTE.

And so, sir, they took him in there to give him a—

BARTOLIN.

Ay, I understand you.

DORFISE.

He's retired a little, and has taken a dose of my syrup: I suppose by this time he has gone to sleep.

BARTOLIN.

That he has not, I am sure, for I hear him walking about and coughing.

COLLETTE.

And would you go to disturb an advocate in the midst of his cough?

BARTOLIN.

I don't like this: I'll go in.

DORFISE.

Grant heaven he may find nothing there: hark! what do I hear! he cries out; murder! my poor advocate's killed to be sure, and I am undone: which way shall I fly? in what convent shall I hide my shame? where shall I drown myself?

BARTOLIN.

[*Returning, and holding Adine by the arm.*

O ho! my dear spouse that is to be: your advocates are mighty pretty figures: you have made a good choice, picked him out from the whole bar: come, my old practitioner, you must disappear from this court, and harangue out the window: away with you.

DORFISE.

My dear husband, do but hear me.

ADINE.

He her husband!

BARTOLIN.

[*To Adine.*

Come, rascal! I must begin my revenge upon you, and curry you out of your insolence.

ADINE.

Alas! sir, on my knees I ask your pardon; indeed I have not merited your resentment: when you know

"YOUR ADVOCATES ARE MIGHTY PRETTY FIGURES"

me, you will lament my fate: I am not what I appear to be.

BARTOLIN.

You appear, my friend, to be a scoundrel, a dangerous rival, and shall be punished: come along, sir.

ADINE.

Help, here, help! for heaven's sake, sir.

DORFISE.

He's mad with passion: help, neighbors, help!

BARTOLIN.

Hold your tongue.

DORFISE, COLLETTE, ADINE.

Help, here, help!

BARTOLIN.

[*Thrusting out Adine.*

Come, sir, get out of my house.

SCENE V.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

What an unfortunate affair this is! he'll kill the poor boy, and me, too, perhaps.

COLLETTE.

To be sure, nothing but the devil could make you sign a contract with such a wretch as this.

DORFISE.

The villain! go, Collette, this minute, to a justice, and get a warrant for him: charge him with—

COLLETTE.

With what, madam?

DORFISE.

With everything.

COLLETTE.

Very well, madam: but which way are you going?

DORFISE.

That I know not.

SCENE VI.

MME. DE BURLET, DORFISE, COLLETTE.

MME. DE BURLET.

Why, cousin, cousin, what's the matter?

DORFISE.

O cousin!

MME. DE BURLET.

One would have thought you'd been robbed and murdered, or that your house had been on fire: what a roaring and a noise there is here, my dear!

DORFISE.

O cousin, I'll tell you the affair; but, for heaven's sake, keep my secret.

MME. DE BURLET.

I'm no keeper of secrets, cousin; but I can be as

discreet as other folks upon occasion: what is this mighty affair of yours?

DORFISE.

The affair's a very bad one, I assure you; in short —I am—

MME. DE BURLET.

What?

DORFISE.

Promised in marriage, cousin.

MME. DE BURLET.

I know it, my dear—to Blandford: so much the better: I think it's a good match: I wish you happy, and intend to dance at your wedding.

DORFISE.

O my dear, you're mistaken: Bartolin, who is now swearing below stairs, is the man.

MME. DE BURLET.

Indeed! so much the worse: I don't approve of your choice; but if it is done, it can't be helped: is he absolutely your husband to all intents and purposes?

DORFISE.

Not yet: the world is an utter stranger to it; but the contract has been made a great while.

MME. DE BURLET.

O cancel it by all means.

DORFISE.

It will set the wicked world talking: O cousin, I have been sadly treated. This vile man, you must

know, found me with a young Turk, who was shut up in my closet; not with any bad design.

MME. DE BURLET.

O no, to be sure! pray, cousin, is not this a little out of character for a prude?

DORFISE.

Not at all: it is a little *faux-pas,* a small weakness only.

MME. DE BURLET.

Well, I am glad you own so much: our faults are sometimes useful: this slip may soften your temper; perhaps for the future you will be less severe.

DORFISE.

Severe or not, for heaven's sake, cousin, get me out of this scrape, and save me from the tongue of scandal, and the violence of Bartolin; if possible, deliver the poor lad, who is scarce eighteen. O, here comes my spouse.

SCENE VII.

BARTOLIN, DORFISE, MME. DE BURLET.

MME. DE BURLET.

What an uproar you are making here for nothing! only on a slight suspicion to put all her friends in such a taking: fie, M. Bartolin.

BARTOLIN.

I ask pardon: indeed, ladies, I am ashamed, and sorry I conceived such suspicions; but appearances were strong against her: how indeed could I ever

have imagined that this young fellow, for so I thought him, was only a girl in disguise?

DORFISE.

[*Aside.*

An excellent come-off.

MME. DE BURLET.

Mighty well indeed! so my lady here took a girl for a boy?

BARTOLIN.

The poor child is in tears still: by my troth, I pitied her: but why could you not have told me who she was? why take a pleasure in trying my temper, and making me angry.

DORFISE.

[*Aside.*

Droll enough this! he has played his part well, however, to persuade Bartolin he is a girl, and get off so well: 'twas a charming contrivance: the dear little rogue! but love is a great wit. [*To Bartolin*] Now thou abominable jealous wretch, answer me, how dare you thus affront my virtue? the poor little innocent confided in me; my cousin here knows how warmly I espoused her cause, and protected her honor: you ought to have had a loose coquette, a jilt, for your wife; you deserve no better, and I hope you'll meet with one: I'll expose you, sir, though I know it will cost me dear, but I am determined at all events to have the contract annulled.

BARTOLIN.

I know upon these occasions women must cry: but prithee, my dear, don't cry so much: come, let us be friends; and let me desire you, madam, [*to Mme.*

de Burlet] to say nothing about this affair: I have some very good reasons for concealing it.

DORFISE.

[*To Mme. de Burlet.*

Be silent, dear cousin, and save me; on no account mention it to the good M. Blandford.

MME. DE BURLET.

You may depend on it, I never will.

BARTOLIN.

We shall be greatly obliged to you.

SCENE VIII.

DORFISE, MME. DE BURLET, BARTOLIN, COLLETTE.

COLLETTE.

M. Blandford is below, madam, and says he must come up.

DORFISE.

O dreadful! this is my luck! always crossed—

BARTOLIN.

But after all—

MME. DE BURLET.

Nay, nay, after what you have seen, and being guilty of so much injustice as you have, you have no business to give yourself airs: try what you can do —to obey.

SCENE IX.

DORFISE, MME. DE BURLET.

MME. DE BURLET.

I'm glad to see this affair has turned out so well, however: to be sure your intended spouse is rather short-sighted: but between you and me, cousin, it was a strange choice this: and then to take a boy for a girl, at his age: well, husbands will be husbands still I find, always jealous, always laughed at, and led by the nose.

DORFISE.

[*Prudishly.*

I don't understand this language, madam, nor have I deserved this treatment from you: surely you don't really believe that a young fellow was locked up in my closet?

MME. DE BURLET.

Indeed but I do, my dear.

DORFISE.

What! when my husband told you to the contrary?

MME. DE BURLET.

Perhaps your spouse might be mistaken; he may have bad eyes: besides, cousin, did you not tell me yourself here in this very place, that a young fellow—

DORFISE.

Ridiculous! what I, child, I tell you so? never: do you think I have lost my senses? indeed, cousin,

you should take more care what you say: when once a woman's tongue has got a habit of talking thus lightly, and spreading scandalous stories, invented merely to calumniate and injure people, there is no end of it, but 'tis a hundred to one that she repents of it sometime in her life.

MME. DE BURLET.

I calumniate, I scandalize you, cousin?

DORFISE.

You, madam: I vow and swear—

MME. DE BURLET.

Don't swear, cousin.

DORFISE.

But I will.

MME. DE BURLET.

Fie, my dear, fie: come, come, I shall believe no more of the story than I ought to believe: take a husband, cousin, two if you please; deceive them both as well as you can; make young fellows pass for girls; on the strength of your character govern twenty families, and be called a woman of virtue; with all my heart, it will give me no uneasiness, you are extremely welcome: nay, I admire your management and discretion: 'tis your pride and glory to deceive the world, and mine to divert myself with it, without descending to falsehood: I live for my pleasure: adieu, my dear, my worldly weakness bends in all humility to your profound wisdom: dear cousin, adieu.

SCENE X.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

Now will that foolish creature go and pull me to pieces: my honor and my character are gone: the libertines will laugh at my expense: Dorfise will be the common butt of every satirist: my name will be hitched into a hundred rhymes, and furnish matter for every singsong in town: Blandford will believe the scandal, and Bartolin will cry for vengeance: how shall I stop the tongues of calumny? two husbands and a lover in one day! what a deal one has to go through to be a prude! would it not be better after all to fear nothing, to affect nothing, and be a plain woman of honor? well: one day or other I'll try to be one.

COLLETTE.

At least, madam, let us take care to appear as such; when we do all we can, you know, we have done enough; and she is not always a woman of virtue who wishes to be so.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

O Collette, I'm inevitably ruined: would I could see young Adine; he is so kind, and so sensible! he

would tell me everything they do and say, and I might take my measures with him accordingly: my affairs would at least be more settled, and I should know what I have to depend on; what shall I do, Collette?

COLLETTE.

See him, and talk to him freely.

DORFISE.

Right: towards evening: O Collette, if success would but crown this mysterious affair, if I could preserve my reputation, and keep my lover, if I could but keep one of them, I should be happy.

COLLETTE.

Ay, ay, one of them is enough, in conscience.

DORFISE.

But have you taken care the chevalier shall be here presently; that he shall come privately; and, according to custom, let everybody know it?

COLLETTE.

O never fear, he'll be here I warrant you; he's always ready, and fancies you've a passion for him.

DORFISE.

He may be of service: wise men in their designs, the better to compass their ends, always make use of fools.

SCENE II.

DORFISE, MONDOR, COLLETTE.

DORFISE.

My dear chevalier, come along: I have something to say to you.

MONDOR.

You know, madam, I am the lowest of your subjects, your humble slave, your chevalier: what must I do? tilt for you? fight for you? die for you? spite of all your cruelty, I am ready: speak, madam, and it is done.

DORFISE.

And am I indeed so happy as to have charmed the agreeable Mondor? but do you love me as you ought to love me, with that pure and refined passion?

MONDOR.

I do; but prithee, my dear, don't be so formal; beauty is most engaging when it is easy and tractable: the excess of virtue is disgusting: in short, my dear, you want a little of my correction.

DORFISE.

What think you of young Adine?

MONDOR.

Who, I? nothing at all? his figure makes me perfectly easy, I assure you: Mars and Hercules were never jealous of Adonis.

DORFISE.

Well: I love your confidence, and shall reward it: the malicious world perhaps will tell you I am se-

cretly engaged; but 'tis false; believe them not: a hundred lovers have ogled, and teased me, but I was born to be subdued by you, and you alone.

MONDOR.

That's more indeed than I could flatter myself with the hopes of.

DORFISE.

To convince you of it, I promise to marry you as soon as ever you please: be prudent, and be happy.

MONDOR.

Happiness is enough for me, prudence we'll leave to another opportunity: but do not, my dear charmer, delay it: time, you know, is precious.

DORFISE.

But then one thing I must insist on from you.

MONDOR.

I am your husband, madam, and you may command me.

DORFISE.

You must take care that none of my troublesome visitors intrude on me to-night: the proud, peevish Blandford, my cousin, and her fool Darmin, with all their train of impertinent relations, must go somewhere else, for I positively will not be disturbed by them; then, chevalier, at midnight, and not before, I'll meet you in the arbor; bring your lawyer with you, and we'll sign and seal.

MONDOR.

Transporting thought! how I shall triumph over that fool Blandford! well, I will so laugh at, so ridicule the poor creature.

DORFISE.

Be sure you don't forget to be at my window a little before midnight: away: be discreet.

MONDOR.

O if Blandford did but know this!

DORFISE.

Away, begone, or we shall be surprised.

MONDOR.

Adieu, my dear wife.

DORFISE.

Adieu.

MONDOR.

I go with rapture, to wait for the dear happy hour when prudery shall be sacrificed to love.

SCENE III.

DORFISE, COLLETTE.

COLLETTE.

Well, if I can guess at your design, hang me: 'tis a riddle to me.

DORFISE.

I'll explain it to you: I've made Mondor promise to tell nothing, but I know very well he'll tell all, that's enough, his tale will justify me: Blandford will think everything mere calumny, and not know a word of the truth; to-day at least I shall be safe; and after to-morrow, if success crowns my designs, I shall be afraid of nobody.

COLLETTE.

Delightful! I'm glad to hear you say so, and yet you put me in a horrid fright: are you sure, ma'am, the plan is well laid? and that you won't, after all, fall into the snare yourself, which you laid for others? for heaven's sake, take care what you do.

DORFISE.

O Collette, Collette, how strangely one slip brings on another! we are led aside from error to error, and from crime to crime, till our heads turn round, and we fall down the precipice: but I have one string still to my bow; I am sure of young Adine: the chevalier comes at twelve, but my little lover will be beforehand with him: let him be here at nine, Collette, do you hear me?

COLLETTE.

I'll take care of that, madam.

DORFISE.

They take him for a girl, by his air, his voice, and his beardless chin; therefore, tell him I would have him dress himself in girl's clothes.

COLLETTE.

An excellent scheme! heaven prosper it!

DORFISE.

The boy may serve, you know, to dispel one's melancholy: but the great point I would bring about is, to throw all the scandal upon my cousin, and to make Blandford believe that Adine came here upon her account: let him fall a dupe to his own credulity.

COLLETTE.

The fittest instrument you could have chosen: for he believes everything that's bad of her, and everything that's good of you: imagines he sees clearly, and at the same time is stark blind: I have taken care already to confirm him in the opinion that our little coquette is in love with the boy, and not you.

DORFISE.

To be sure, lies are bad things; but they are mighty serviceable sometimes, and do a great deal of good.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE.

BLANDFORD.

O tempora! O mores! dreadful corruption indeed! to desire him to visit her! the poor, simple, ingenuous youth, she wants to draw him into a passion for her, and employs all the little subtleties, all the snares which love makes use of to catch unwary hearts.

DORFISE.

Well, but after all, M. Blandford, she may not have carried it so far as we imagine: I would not do her so much injury as to suppose it: one should not think evil of one's neighbor: to be sure, things were in a fair way, but you know our French coquettes.

BLANDFORD.

Yes, yes, I know them.

DORFISE.

The moment a young man appears with an air of innocence and simplicity, they are after him.

BLANDFORD.

Yes; yes: vice, above all things, is fond of seducing virtue: but how, Dorfise, can you bear people of such character?

DORFISE.

As patiently as I can, sir: but this is not all.

BLANDFORD.

Why, what, pray—

DORFISE.

O sir, you have another tale to hear: do you know, these excellent contrivers would endeavor to persuade the world truly that the young fellow was brought in for me?

BLANDFORD.

For you?

DORFISE.

Yes; they say I wanted to seduce him.

BLANDFORD.

Well, that to be sure is ridiculous to the last degree: for you!

DORFISE.

Ay, for me, and that this pretty youth—

BLANDFORD.

That was really a fine invention.

DORFISE.

A better than they think for. They have played

me a great many such tricks: O M. Blandford, if you knew what I suffer! they'll tell you, too, I'm to be married to that fool, Mondor, and this very night.

BLANDFORD.

O my dear Dorfise! the more thou art wounded by the envenomed darts of slander and calumny, with the warmer zeal shall this heart, that adores thee, defend thy injured and unspotted virtue.

DORFISE.

You are deceived, indeed you are.

BLANDFORD.

No, Dorfise: I think I know myself a little, and I would have laid my life on it I saw your cousin ogling Adine this very day: let me tell you, it requires sense and understanding to be honest: I never knew a fool with a good heart: virtue itself is nothing but good sense: I am sorry for Darmin, because I really love and esteem him; it was against my advice he ventured to embark in such a leaky vessel.

SCENE V.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, DARMIN, MME. DE BURLET.

MME. DE BURLET.

What? always dismal and solemn, full of spleen and rancor, grumbling and growling at all mankind, that either don't hear you, or if they do, only laugh at your folly? dear virtuous fool, finish thy soliloquies, and come along with me: I have just bought a few trinkets, you shall have some of them: come,

we're going to Mondor's, he's to treat us; I have ordered him to get music, to purge your melancholy humors; and after that, my dear, I'll take you by the hand, and dance with you till to-morrow morning, [*to Dorfise*] ay, and you shall dance too, Mme. Prim.

DORFISE.

Prithee, hair-brains, hold thy tongue: such things would not become me; and besides, madam, you should remember—

MME. DE BURLET.

None of your "besides" I beg you, madam: every thing is forgotten; my philosophy is, remember nothing.

DORFISE.

[*To Blandford.*

You see now whether I was right or not: your servant, sir: she really grows too scandalous, I must be gone.

BLANDFORD.

O stay, madam.

DORFISE.

No, sir: 'tis impossible: it hurts my soul, my honor—

MME. DE BURLET.

My goodness! talk less of honor, madam, and regard it more.

[*Dorfise goes out.*

DARMIN.

[*To Mme. de Burlet.*

She seems out of humor: I fancy my friend, Blandford, begins to find her out.

MME. DE BURLET.

O all the world must talk of it; but Darmin and I say nothing.

BLANDFORD.

I fancy not, indeed: you would hardly confess to me such folly and extravagance.

DARMIN.

No, sir; we would not make you so unhappy.

MME. DE BURLET.

We know your humor too well, to make you still more miserable by reproaching you with your misfortunes.

BLANDFORD.

Go, go, hide yourselves both, and die with shame.

MME. DE BURLET.

Why should we disturb at once the quiet of your whole life, by exposing Dorfise, and make you a common laughing-stock? no, sir; I own I am light and airy, free, and familiar, but have yet some goodness in me, and am no busybody: I should see you deceived a thousand times by your friend, and duped by your wife, hear your adventures chanted through every street, nay, sing them myself, before ever you should hear a word from me: to tell you the truth, the two great ends I have in view are peace and pleasure; I love myself, and therefore hate all idle reports and scandalous tales, true or false: live and be happy is my motto: and he, I think, is a great fool who makes himself miserable by the follies of others.

BLANDFORD.

Light, unthinking woman! it is not the affairs of others, it is your own, madam, that now call for your attention.

MME. DE BURLET.

Mine, sir?

BLANDFORD.

Yes, madam: 'tis you who are to blame, and highly, too; you who seduced a virtuous youth, and then endeavored to lay the shameful intrigue on the innocent Dorfise.

MME. DE BURLET.

O the scheme is excellent: it is more than I expected: and so it was I, who sometimes—

BLANDFORD.

Yes, madam, you yourself.

MME. DE BURLET.

With Adine!

BLANDFORD.

Yes.

MME. DE BURLET.

I am in love with him then?

BLANDFORD.

Most certainly.

MME. DE BURLET.

And 'twas I that put him in the closet?

BLANDFORD.

It was: the thing was clear enough.

MME. DE BURLET.

O mighty well! a lucky thought indeed! I admire the contrivance: O my dear madman, what a mix-

ture thou art of honesty and folly! the very model of Don Quixote, brave, sensible, knowing, and virtuous, yet in one point an absolute fool; but for heaven's sake take care how you recover your senses: believe me, it would be the worst thing you ever did in your life: well, folly has its advantages: adieu: come, Darmin.

SCENE VI.

BLANDFORD, DARMIN.

BLANDFORD.

Stay, Darmin, I have your honor and your interest at heart: I am angry, and I have reason to be so; in short, you must quit this artful woman, get out of the snare she has laid for you, despise her, or break with me.

DARMIN.

The alternative is a cruel one: I own to thee, I love my friend, and I love my mistress: but how can thy hard heart judge so uncharitably of all human kind: can't you see that this web of perfidy is woven by a base, designing woman? that she deceives you, and would lay the shame and ignominy on another?

BLANDFORD.

Dost thou not see, fool as thou art, that a vile, scandalous, abandoned wretch has chosen thee for her tool, her butt, her stalking horse, that, like an idiot, you bite at the hook; and that she is only trying to see how far she can exercise her tyranny over your easy heart?

DARMIN.

Easy as it is, let me entreat you, ask the only witness who is able to determine it: I have sent for young Adine, he will tell you the whole truth of the affair.

BLANDFORD.

O yes: I doubt not but the jade has tutored her young parrot well, and taught him his lesson: but let him come, let him endeavor to deceive me; I shall not believe him: I see your intention, I see plainly enough, you want, by every artifice, to blacken and destroy my dear Dorfise, to draw me off to your niece, whose charms you have so often boasted: but you need not give yourself the trouble, for I shall never think of her.

DARMIN.

As you please for that: but indeed, Blandford, I pity your folly: to experience the falsehood of a perfidious woman may perhaps be many a poor man's fate, and must be borne; but really to lose one's money is a serious affair: this Bartolin, this noble friend of yours, has he refunded?

BLANDFORD.

What business is that of yours?

DARMIN.

I beg pardon, I thought it was; but I am mistaken: here comes Adine: I'll retire: let me inform you, if you distrust him, you are more in the wrong than you think for: he has a noble heart, and you may one day know he is not what perhaps he might appear to be.

SCENE VII.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

BLANDFORD.

So! I see they are all resolutely bent to lead me by the nose: Dorfise, thank heaven, is of another nature; she says nothing, but submits to her unhappy fate without appearing too deeply affected by it; too confident, or too timid; she avoids me, and hides herself in retirement; such is always the behavior of injured innocence. Now, young man, tell me the truth in every particular with sincerity; nature seems in you pure and uncorrupted; you know I love you; do not abuse my growing inclination to you, but consider that the happiness of my life is concerned in this affair.

ADINE.

Indeed, sir, I love you too well to abuse or to deceive you.

BLANDFORD.

Tell me then everything as it passed.

ADINE.

First then, I assure you, that Dorfise—

BLANDFORD.

Stop there, you mean her cousin, I'm sure you do.

ADINE.

I don't indeed, sir.

BLANDFORD.

Well, go on.

ADINE.

Dorfise then, I say, introduced me by a private door to her chamber.

BLANDFORD.

She did, but 'twas not for herself.

ADINE.

It was.

BLANDFORD.

No, child; 'twas Mme. de Burlet, you know it was.

ADINE.

I tell you, sir, Dorfise was positively in love with me.

BLANDFORD.

The little rascal!

ADINE.

The excess of her passion surprised and shocked me: I was far from being pleased with it: nay, I assure you, I was angry at her: I was incensed at her falsehood; and told her, if I had been like her, I should have been more faithful.

BLANDFORD.

The villain! how they have prepared him! well, what followed?

ADINE.

After this she grew loud and vehement, when on a sudden a violent knocking was heard, and who should come in but her husband.

BLANDFORD.

Her husband! O very well! what a ridiculous story! the chevalier, I suppose.

ADINE.

No: a real husband, I assure you; for he was extremely brutal, and extremely jealous: he threatened to murder her, called her false, perfidious, infamous, and abandoned: I expected to have been killed, too, for he was in a dreadful rage with me, though for what reason I know not: I was forced to fall on my knees and entreat him to spare my life; I'm sure I tremble yet at the thoughts of him.

BLANDFORD.

The little coward! but this husband, what was his name?

ADINE.

I don't know, indeed.

BLANDFORD.

A fine trick this!—what sort of a man was he? describe him to me.

ADINE.

He seemed to me, as far as the horrid fright I was in permitted me to observe him, a fellow of a very disagreeable aspect, fat and short, like a turnspit, flat-nosed, with a large chin, hunch-backed, a yellow-tanned complexion, gray eyebrows, and an eye that looked like—the devil.

BLANDFORD.

An excellent picture! how can I recollect him by all this? yellow, you say, tanned, gray, short and fat: who can it be? but you only mean, I see, to laugh at me.

ADINE.

Try, then, sir, and prove me: to-night, this very night, she has appointed again to meet me.

BLANDFORD.

Another appointment with Mme. de Burlet?

ADINE.

Still, sir, you will mistake the person.

BLANDFORD.

Not with Dorfise?

ADINE.

With her, indeed.

BLANDFORD.

With her?

ADINE.

With her, I tell you.

BLANDFORD.

Amazing! you confound me! an assignation with Dorfise this night?

ADINE.

This very night, sir; if you please, you may see me there: I am to go in girl's clothes, which she herself sent me; and to go in by a private door to your mistress, sir, your faithful, prudent, discreet mistress.

BLANDFORD.

This is too much; I cannot, will not bear it: whichever way I consider it, I fear she is disloyal: may I depend upon you?

ADINE.

My heart is too deeply concerned for your interest and happiness to be insincere: yours I know is truth itself: indeed, M. Blandford, I love, and am faithful to you.

BLANDFORD.

The little flatterer!

ADINE.

Can you doubt my honor?

BLANDFORD.

Away! I—

SCENE VIII.

BLANDFORD, ADINE, MONDOR.

MONDOR.

Come, come, you make the guests wait, and stop the course of pleasure: why, you never wanted mirth and good company more in your life: to be sure, your affairs go badly enough; you have lost your mistress, but never mind it: you should not have set up for my rival; I told you I should gain the victory, and so I have.

BLANDFORD.

What would you inform me of, friend?

MONDOR.

Nay, nothing of consequence, only that I'm going to be married to your mistress, that's all.

BLANDFORD.

O very well! I know that already.

MONDOR.

What! did you know that I was to carry the lawyer with me, and that—

BLANDFORD.

Yes, yes, I know it all, your whole plot, and I don't care a farthing about it: [*Aside*] This boy has not learned half his lesson; hark'ee, sir, [*To Adine*] this appointment and yours are a little incompatible: what say you to this, sir? does it strike you? either you endeavor to deceive me, or are deceived yourself: but you are young in the school of vice; a heart like thine, simple and inexperienced, is an excellent instrument in the hands of a villain: alas! thou camest here but to make me miserable.

ADINE.

This is too much, sir: take care lest your harsh temper, and ill-placed resentment, should destroy that pity which still pleads for you; 'tis that alone which keeps me here: but go, run headlong to your ruin; listen to nobody, suspect your best friend, and believe only those who abuse you; accuse and affront me; but learn to respect a heart that, with regard to you, was never a deceiver, or deceived.

MONDOR.

Hear you that, sir? but you are choked with spleen; even children laugh at you; prithee, learn to be wiser: come along with me, and drown all your cares in Greek wine: come away, boy.

SCENE IX.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

BLANDFORD.

Stay, Adine: thou hast moved me: thy concern alarms me: you know my humor, my folly, but you

know my heart too; 'tis honest, and has only too much sensibility: you see how I am distressed; can you take a cruel pleasure in laughing at my misfortunes? tell me the truth, I conjure thee.

ADINE.

I know your heart is good, nor is mine less pure: never till this hour did I but once put on disguise; but with regard to Dorfise and yourself I have been honest and sincere: I own I lament in you that fatal passion which has blinded you, but 'tis passion I know that will seduce the wisest of us all; love alone can set everything right; that has taken away your sight, and that should restore it to you.

[*She goes out.*

BLANDFORD.

[*Alone.*

What can he mean? love alone should restore it; he once put on a disguise, and yet he is sincere! I don't understand it; certainly 'tis all a trick, a plot only to make a fool of me: Mondor, Darmin, her cousin, Bartolin, Adine, Dorfise, Collette, all the world in short conspires with my own foolish heart to make me miserable and ridiculous: this vile world, which I despise as it deserves, is nothing but a confused heap of folly and wickedness: but if in this tempest of the soul I must say whether I will be knave or fool, my choice is made, and I bless my lot: O heaven! let me be still a dupe, but O preserve my virtue!

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V. SCENE. I.

BLANDFORD.

[*Alone.*

What will become of me? where shall I fly for safety? my misfortunes follow one another without end: I go to sea; a pirate attacks and sinks my vessel: I come to land, and there I am told that an ungrateful woman, whom I adored, is a worse pirate still: a strong box, which I had left behind, is my only resource: a rascal promises to give it me back, and puts me off from time to time, and he perhaps may prove a third corsair: I am waiting for Adine, and he is not come yet; everybody provokes, and everybody avoids me: all perhaps the consequence of my unhappy temper which made me suspicious of every friend, and open to every enemy: if it be so, I am wrong; I own I am, and fortune has a right to sport thus with me: of what service is my melancholy virtue but to make me more sensible to my miseries, and more conscious of having deserved them? this boy, too, not come yet!

SCENE II.

BLANDFORD, MME. DE BURLET *passing across the stage.*

BLANDFORD.

[*Stopping her.*

Stay, madam, I beseech you stay, and calm, if possible, this tempest of my soul; for heaven's sake, one word with you: where are you running to?

MME. DE BURLET.

To supper: to be merry: I'm in haste, sir.

BLANDFORD.

I know I affronted you, and you have reason to be angry; but forget and forgive.

MME. DE BURLET.

[*Smiling.*

O I have forgiven you a great while ago: I'm not angry, I assure you.

BLANDFORD.

You are too good: will your gayety for once deign to interest itself in my distress?

MME. DE BURLET.

Gay as I am, M. Blandford, I assure you, I have friendship, esteem, and pity for you.

BLANDFORD.

You are sorry, then, for my unhappy fate.

MME. DE BURLET.

Your unhappy fate! yes: but more for your unhappy temper.

BLANDFORD.

You are honest, however, and truth you know, has always charms for me: but say, is Darmin a faithful friend, or does he deceive me?

MME. DE BURLET.

Darmin loves you, and possesses all your virtues with more softness and complacency.

BLANDFORD.

And Bartolin?

MME. DE BURLET.

You want me to answer for Bartolin, too, and for all the world, I suppose: excuse me; Bartolin, for aught I know, is an honest cashier; what reason have you to suspect him? he's your friend, and the friend of—Dorfise.

BLANDFORD.

Of Dorfise? but tell me freely; could Dorfise, could she entertain a passion for a boy, and in so short a time, too? and what is this lawyer that Mondor talks of? public report says he's to marry her.

MME. DE BURLET.

Public reports should be despised.

BLANDFORD.

I am this moment come from her: she has sworn eternal truth to me: she has wept: love and grief were in her eyes: did they belie her heart? is she false? and is Adine—you laugh at me.

MME. DE BURLET.

I laugh at your ridiculous figure: come, come, take courage, man: as for the boy, take my word for it, he'll never forsake you; 'tis impossible.

BLANDFORD.

You give me comfort: the coxcomb, Mondor, is not worth my care; Dorfise loves me, and I love her forever.

MME. DE BURLET.

Forever? that's too much.

BLANDFORD.

Not where one is beloved; but then this Adine must be a base calumniator, must have a bad heart.

MME. DE BURLET.

O no: be assured, he has a noble mind, candid, honest, and ingenuous, the happy favorite of indulgent nature.

BLANDFORD.

You mock me, madam.

MME. DE BURLET.

Indeed I don't: 'tis truth.

BLANDFORD.

Now am I plunged again in darkness and uncertainty; you sport with my distress, and take pleasure in tormenting me: Dorfise, or he, has deeply injured me: one of them, you must allow, has been a traitor to me; is it not so?

MME. DE BURLET.

[*Laughing.*

That may be.

BLANDFORD.

If it is, you see what reason I had—

MME. DE BURLET.

And after all it may not be so: I accuse nobody.

BLANDFORD.

I'll be revenged.

MME. DE BURLET.

Ridiculous! be less angry and more discreet: come, I'll tell you what; will you take the only sure method, one that I shall recommend to you?

BLANDFORD.

I will.

MME. DE BURLET.

Then leave this dark mysterious affair to itself; make no bustle about it, but turn everything, as I do, into a jest; take your money from Bartolin, and live along with us without care or solicitude: never go too deeply into things, but float with me upon the surface; you know the world, and bear with it; the only way to enjoy is to skim lightly over it: you look upon me as a giddy creature, and so I am; but let me tell you, the only matter of importance in this life is to enjoy ourselves, and be happy.

SCENE III.

BLANDFORD. [*Alone.*

To be happy! good! excellent advice! would not one think now it were an easy thing; that one had only to wish for happiness, to possess it? would it were so! and why should it not be? why should I take so much pains to make myself unhappy? shall I suffer this boy, and Darmin, and Mondor to distract me thus? no: I'll follow this giddy girl's advice; she's gay, but honest and sincere: Dorfise loves me, and I am yet secure: for the future, I'll see nothing, listen to nothing: they wanted to alarm me with this Adine, to hoodwink, and then to lead me where they pleased; but I'm not to be caught in their snares: Darmin is wrapped up in that niece of his, and would fain palm her upon me; but I detest her: ha! what's this?

[*Adine appears in woman's clothes at the farther end of the stage.*

Yonder's that unhappy youth who has caused me

so much uneasiness: he looks exactly like a girl: how genteel his air, and so easy, too, as if the clothes had been made for him! the face is too truly female.

SCENE IV.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

ADINE.

Well, sir, you see I'm dressed for my part, and now you will know the truth.

BLANDFORD.

I desire to know nothing more about it! I have heard enough; leave me, I beseech you; I have altered my sentiments, and hate this disguise; go, go, put on your own habit, and trouble yourself no more with this affair.

ADINE.

What say you, sir? at last then I perceive it is not in my power to change your unalterable heart, or to reverse your cruel fate; alas! you know not the weight of grief that hangs upon me, but ere long you will see the fatal effect of it: farewell! I leave you, sir, forever.

BLANDFORD.

What can this mean? he weeps! speak, I entreat thee, tell me, what interest hast thou in my happiness or misery?

ADINE.

My interest, sir, was yours: till this moment never knew I any other: but I have been to blame, I tried to serve you; 'tis not the first time.

BLANDFORD.

The innocence of his look, his modest confidence, his voice, his air, his open and ingenuous behavior, still plead for him—but the hour is past when this intrigue you told me of was to have taken place; I was to have been an eye-witness of it.

ADINE.

Hark! I hear a door opening: this is the place, and this the time, when you shall be convinced who it is that loves you.

BLANDFORD.

Just heaven! it is possible?

ADINE.

It is.

BLANDFORD.

Stay you here then: but 'tis all a trick, an artifice: Dorfise! no—

ADINE.

Hush! I hear a noise: it comes towards us: I'm frightened, 'tis so dark.

BLANDFORD.

Fear nothing.

ADINE.

Be silent: for I hear somebody coming: hush! away.

SCENE V.

ADINE, BLANDFORD, *on one side of the stage, which is supposed to be quite dark;* DORFISE *on the other, on tiptoe.*

DORFISE.

I thought I heard my charmer's voice; how punctual he is! the dear boy.

ADINE.

Hush!

DORFISE.

Hush, is it you?

ADINE.

Yes: 'tis I: still faithful to my love: 'tis I who come here to prove that I have deserved a better return for all my tenderness.

DORFISE.

I cannot give thee a better: you must forgive me; I would not have made you wait so long, my dear, but Bartolin, whom I did not expect, is returned; in spite of all my care, he has got a fit of jealousy upon him.

ADINE.

Perhaps he is afraid of meeting Blandford here: he is a dangerous rival.

DORFISE.

Very likely, indeed: O my dear, what with Blandford, and my vile husband, I'm dreadfully hampered: I don't know which I hate most: in short, I'm sure of nothing, but that I love you.

ADINE.

You hate Blandford then heartily?

DORFISE.

I think I do: fear naturally begets aversion.

ADINE.

Well, but your other spouse—

DORFISE.

O him I never think of.

BLANDFORD.

[*Aside.*

How I could wish now—

ADINE.

[*Softly to Blandford.*

Hush! hush!

DORFISE.

I have been consulting, my dear, about the contract: it certainly might be set aside: I wish it were, and then I might have hopes of another match.

ADINE.

What, of marrying me?

DORFISE.

I think the best way would be for us to part for a time, to avoid scandal; and then meet, and be united by a sacred and a lasting tie.

ADINE.

A lasting tie! come then: let us begone: but how are we to live?

DORFISE.

Your prudent foresight charms me: I always admired your discretion: you must know, then, the fighting M. Blandford, a hero at sea, but an arrant blockhead at home, when he left Marseilles, to go after the pirates, most cordially and most affectionately consigned to me with his heart, his money and jewels also: as I was, like him, a novice in these

affairs, I put them into the hands of my other husband; from him I must endeavor to recover them, and assist Blandford: the poor man is honest and should live: away: let us part immediately, and take care nobody follows us.

ADINE.

But what will the world say?

DORFISE.

O never heed it: I was afraid of its scandal before I loved: but now I despise it: I'll be a slave to none but thee.

ADINE.

But me?

DORFISE.

I'll go immediately and get this strong box: that you know will be very necessary to us both: stay here, I'll be back in an instant.

SCENE VI.

BLANDFORD, ADINE.

ADINE.

Well, sir, what think you now?

BLANDFORD.

Never did I behold such base, such black ingratitude, such infernal falsehood; and yet, Adine, you see the force of powerful virtue, how its lively instinct speaks even in the most corrupted heart.

ADINE.

How, sir, in what?

BLANDFORD.

You see the perfidious wretch dared not rob me of all; she talked of assisting me.

ADINE.

[*Ironically.*

O yes, you are mightily obliged to her: have you not another strong box to intrust with this virtuous lady?

BLANDFORD.

Nay, do not laugh at me, Adine, nor plant such daggers in my heart.

ADINE.

I meant to heal and not to wound it: but can you yet admire her?

BLANDFORD.

No: she is loathsome: falsehood has robbed her of every charm.

ADINE.

If, sir, I free you from her snares, may I flatter myself, that while you detest her vices, you will not forget my honest service?

BLANDFORD.

No, generous youth! I look on you as my son and my deliverer, the guardian angel, whom heaven hath sent down to preserve me; the half of all I have will be but a poor reward for thy care and fidelity.

ADINE.

You must not know at present what reward I aspire to: but can your heart refuse the request which Darmin perhaps may ask of you?

BLANDFORD.

Ha! thou hast removed the veil: I see, I see it all; but who, what art thou? art thou indeed what thou resemblest?

ADINE.

[*Smiling.*

Whatever I am, for heaven's sake, be silent now: I hear Dorfise coming this way.

DORFISE.

[*With strong box.*

I've got the box; propitious love has favored my design: here, my dear, take it: away: let us be gone: have you got it fast?

BLANDFORD.

[*Taking it from her, and counterfeiting the voice of Adine.*

Yes.

DORFISE.

Come along then.

SCENE VII.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, ADINE, BARTOLIN *with a sword in his hand, in the dark, he runs up to Adine.*

BARTOLIN.

Stop, villain, stop! art thou not satisfied with robbing me of my wife, but must run away with my money, too?

ADINE.

[*To Blandford.*

Help! murder! help!

BLANDFORD.

[*Fighting with one hand, and holding out the box to Adine with the other.*
Take the box.

SCENE VIII.

BLANDFORD, DORFISE, ADINE, BARTOLIN, DARMIN, MME. DE BURLET, COLLETTE, MONDOR *with a napkin and a bottle in his hand. Flambeaux.*

MME. DE BURLET.

What's the matter here! hui! hui! what! fighting, too?

MONDOR.

Hold, hold, gentlemen, what is all this noise about?

ADINE.

[*To Blandford.*

You're not wounded, sir, I hope?

DORFISE.

[*In confusion.*

Ha!

MME. DE BURLET.

What is the cause of this fray, gentlemen? pray inform us.

BLANDFORD.

[*To Bartolin, after disarming him.*

O nothing, madam; only this worthy gentleman, and trusty treasurer, this honest keeper of the strong

box, had robbed me of my mistress and my fortune: by the assistance of this amiable youth, I have detected their infamous designs, and recovered my money: go, sir, I leave you to your miserable fate, to this virtuous lady: know, my friends, I have unmasked their treacherous hearts; this villain——

BARTOLIN.

[*Going off.*

Your servant, sir.

MONDOR.

A ha! what comes of my assignation now?

BLANDFORD.

O, sir, they made a fool of you.

DARMIN.

And of you too, I think.

BLANDFORD.

They did so, indeed: I feel it yet.

MONDOR.

Treated you like an idiot.

BLANDFORD.

Dreadful, horrible! O prudery, how I detest thee!

MONDOR.

Well, come, let us think no more of prudes, wives, or women, but go in and drink about; that's my way of drowning misfortunes: the man that drinks is never melancholy.

MME. DE BURLET.

I'm really sorry my cousin Dorfise should behave

so foolishly: to be sure, it will set the world to talking, but it will be all over soon, and there's an end of it.

DARMIN.

Come, Blandford, banish sorrow, and for the future take care of a prude: but do you know this boy, who has restored to you your honor and fortune, and saved you from the dangerous precipice which your blind passion had led you to the brink of?

BLANDFORD.

[*Looking at Adine.*

But—

DARMIN.

'Tis my niece.

BLANDFORD.

O heaven!

DARMIN.

The very woman whom I so often proposed to my deluded friend; who, deceived by a faithless wretch, despised and hated all but her.

BLANDFORD.

How could I injure, by an unkind refusal, so many charms! such beauty and such virtue!

ADINE.

You never would have known me, if chance and my own constancy had not removed the veil of black ingratitude, and saved you from yourself.

DARMIN.

You owe everything, your fortune, and your reason to her generous love: what, then, is she to hope for in return? what will you do to make her amends?

BLANDFORD.

[*Kneeling to Adine.*

Adore her!

MONDOR.

This turn of affairs is as agreeable as it is surprising: we shall all be gainers by the change: away.

End of the Fifth and Last Act.

THE TATLER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Euphemia.
Damis.
Hortensia.
Trasimon.
Clitander.
Nerine.
Pasquin.
Several Footmen belonging to Damis.

THE TATLER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

EUPHEMIA, DAMIS.

EUPHEMIA.

Don't imagine, my dear, that, by what I'm going to say, I mean to exercise the authority of a mother, always ready as you know I am, to listen in my turn to your reasons when I think them good; my intention is not to lay my commands on you, but to give you my advice; it is my heart which speaks to you, and that experience I have had in the world makes me foresee evils which I would endeavor to prevent: you have been at court, I think, not above two months; believe me, 'tis a dangerous situation: the perfidious group of courtiers always look on a new-comer with an eye of malevolence, and soon find out all his imperfections: from the first moment, they condemn him, without pity or remorse; and, which is still worse, their judgment is irrevocable: be guarded against their malice: on the first step we take in life, the rest of it must in a great measure depend: if you once make yourself ridiculous, the world will think you always so: the impression will remain: it is in vain, as you advance in years, to change your conduct, and assume a more serious behavior: you will suffer a long time from old prejudices: even if we do grow better, we are still suspected; and I have often known men pay dearly in their old age for the errors of their youth: have a

little regard therefore to the world, and remember you ought to live now more for that than for yourself.

DAMIS.

Now I cannot conceive what all this long preamble tends to.

EUPHEMIA.

I see it appears to you both absurd and unnecessary: you despise those things which may be of the greatest consequence to you; one day or other perhaps you may believe me, when it will be too late: to be plain with you, you are indiscreet: my too long indulgence passed over this fault in your infancy, in your riper years I dread the effects of it: you are not without abilities, a good understanding, and a good heart; but, believe me, in a world so full of injustice, virtue will not make amends for vice; our faults are censured on every occasion, and perhaps the worst we can be guilty of is indiscretion: at court, my dear, the most necessary art is not to talk well, but to know how to hold one's tongue: this is not the place where society enjoys itself in the freedom of easy conversation; here they generally talk without saying anything, and the most tiresome babblers have the best success: I have been long acquainted with the court, and bad enough it is: but whilst we live there, we ought to conform to it. With regard to the women, you should be remarkably cautious; talk but seldom of them, and still less of yourself; pretend to be ignorant of all they do, and all they say; conceal your opinion, and disguise your sentiments; but, above all, be master of your secrets: he who tells those of another will always be esteemed a villain; and he

who tells his own, be assured, will, here at least, be looked on as a fool. What have you to object to this?

DAMIS.

Nothing: I am entirely of your opinion: I abominate the character of a tatler: that is not my foible, I assure you: so far from being guilty of the vice you seem to reproach me with, I now fairly confess to you, madam, that I have a long time concealed a thing from you which I ought to have told you of; but in life, you know, one must sometimes dissemble. I love, and am beloved, by a most charming widow, young, rich, and handsome, as prudent as she is amiable; in a word, it is Hortensia: judge, madam, yourself of my happiness; judge, if it were known, how miserable it would make all our courtiers, who are sighing for her: we have concealed our mutual passion from every one of them: this engagement has been made now for these two whole days past, and you knew nothing of it.

EUPHEMIA.

But I have been at Paris all that time.

DAMIS.

O madam, never was man so happy in his choice: the more you approve of it, the more satisfaction shall I feel, and the more pleasure in my pursuit of her.

EUPHEMIA.

I am sure, Damis, the confidence you repose in me, is a mark of your friendship, and not of your imprudence.

DAMIS.

I hope you never doubted that.

EUPHEMIA.

But seriously, Damis, you should reflect on the prospect of happiness before you: Hortensia, I know, has charms, but, besides that, she is the best match that could have offered itself in all France.

DAMIS.

I know she is.

EUPHEMIA.

She is entirely her own mistress, and can choose for herself.

DAMIS.

So much the better.

EUPHEMIA.

You must take care how you manage her, mark her inclinations, and flatter them.

DAMIS.

O I can do better: I know how to please her.

EUPHEMIA.

Well said, Damis: but remember, she's not fond of noise and bustle; no blustering or flashy airs will be agreeable to her: she may, like other women, have her foibles, but even in love matters she'll always act with discretion: above all, let me advise you not to show off in public with her, nor appear at court together, as if on purpose to be stared at, and become the topic of the day: secret and mystery are all her taste.

DAMIS.

And yet the affair must be known at last.

EUPHEMIA.

But, pray, what lucky accident introduced you to her? she never admits young men to her toilette; but, like a prudent woman, carefully avoids the crowd of wild sparks that are perpetually after her.

DAMIS.

To tell you the truth, I have never been at her house yet: but I have ogled her a long time, and, thank heaven, with success: at first she sent back my letters unopened, but soon after read them, and now writes to me again: for near two days past I have had strong hopes, and, in a word, intend this very night to have a tête-à-tête with her.

EUPHEMIA.

Well: I think I'll go and see her, too: the mother of a lover who is well received, cannot, I imagine, but be agreeable to her. I may contrive to speak of you, and prevail on her to hasten the match, on which I shall tell her your happiness depends: get her consent, and make her yours as soon as you can; I'll do my best to assist you: but speak of it to nobody else, I charge you.

DAMIS.

No, madam: never was mother more tender and affectionate, or friendship more sincere; and to please her shall, for the future, be my first ambition.

EUPHEMIA.

All that I desire of you is, to be happy.

SCENE II.

DAMIS. [*Alone.*

My mother is right: address and cunning are absolutely necessary in this world; there is no succeeding without them. I am resolved to dissemble with the whole court, except ten or a dozen friends, whom I may talk freely with: but first, by way of trial of my prudence, let me tell my secrets to myself a little, and consider, now nobody's by, what fortune has bestowed on me. I hate vanity, but there's no harm in knowing one's self, and doing ourselves justice: I have some wit, am agreeable, well received at court, and thought, I believe, by some, to be admitted to the king's private hours: then, I am certainly very handsome, can dance, sing, drink, and dissemble with the best of them: made a colonel at thirteen, I have reason to hope for a staff at thirty; happy in what I have, and with a good prospect before me; I'll keep Julia, and marry Hortensia; when I have possessed her charms, I'll be guilty every day of a thousand infidelities, but all with prudence and economy, and without ever being suspected as a rambler: in six months' time I shall make away with half her fortune, and enjoy all the court by turns, without her knowing anything of the matter.

SCENE III.

DAMIS, TRASIMON.

DAMIS.

Good morrow, governor.

TRASIMON.

[*Aside.*

Hang him for coming across me.

DAMIS.

My dear governor, let me embrace thee.

TRASIMON.

Excuse me, sir, but I really—

DAMIS.

Positively I will: come, come—

TRASIMON.

Well, what, what do you want?

DAMIS.

Nay, don't frown so, man, pray thee unbend a little: I am the happiest of mortals.

TRASIMON.

I came to tell you, sir—

DAMIS.

O by heavens, you kill me with that hard frozen face of yours!

TRASIMON.

I can't help it, sir, nor can I smile at present, for, let me tell you, you have got a bad affair upon your hands.

DAMIS.

Not so very bad, surely.

TRASIMON.

Erminia and Valere exclaim violently against you: you have spoke of them, it seems, too lightly, and old Lord Horace too desired me to tell you—

DAMIS.

O a mighty matter indeed to be uneasy about! Horace, an old lord! an old fool, a proud coxcomb, puffed up with notions of false honor, low enough at court, he puts on an air of importance in the city, and is as ignorant as he would fain seem knowing: as for Madam Erminia, it's pretty well known I had her, and left her abruptly, an ill-natured busybody; I believe you know a little of her lover, my friend, Valere; did you ever remember such a starched, affected, strained, left-handed understanding? O by the by, I was told yesterday in confidence, that his huge elder brother, that important creature, is well received by Clarice, and the fat countess is bursting with spleen and disappointment. Well but, my old commandant, how go your love-affairs?

TRASIMON.

You know I don't trouble myself much about the sex.

DAMIS.

That's not my case; for I do, and in faith, both in court and city, they keep me pretty well employed: but listen, while I intrust you with a secret, on which the happiness of my life depends.

TRASIMON.

Can I serve you in it?

DAMIS.

No: not in the least.

TRASIMON.

Then pray tell me nothing about it.

DAMIS.

O but the rights of friendship—

TRASIMON.

'Tis that very friendship which makes me shrink from the weight of a secret which is intrusted to me, not out of real regard, but from mere folly and weakness, which anybody else might keep as well as myself; which is generally attended with a thousand suspicions, and may chance to give us both a great deal of uneasiness, me for knowing, and you for saying more than you ought.

DAMIS.

Say what you will about it, captain, I must let you have the pleasure of reading this billet-doux, which this very day—

TRASIMON.

What a strange humor—

DAMIS.

You'll say it's written with a great deal of tenderness.

TRASIMON.

Well, if you insist upon it—

DAMIS.

'Tis dictated by love itself: you'll see how fond she is of me: 'tis the hand that wrote it which makes it so valuable: but you shall see it: zounds, I've lost it; positively I can't find it—hullo, la Fleur, la Brie.

SCENE IV.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, *Several Footmen.*

FOOTMAN.

Did you call, sir?

DAMIS.

Step immediately into the gallery, and bring me all the letters I received this morning: go to the old duke, and—O here it is, the blundering rascals had put it there by mistake. [*To the footman*] you may go. Now, you shall see it; mind now, I beg you'll attend.

SCENE V.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

CLITANDER.

[*With a letter in his hand, speaking to Pasquin.*

Stay you, Pasquin, in this garden all day; be sure you mark everything that passes; observe Hortensia well; and bring me an account of every step she takes: I shall know then—

SCENE VI.

DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER.

DAMIS.

O here comes the marquis: good morrow, marquis.

CLITANDER.

[*A letter in his hand.*

Morrow to you.

DAMIS.

Why, what's the matter with you to-day, with that long melancholy face? what the deuce ails you

all? every creature I see looks gloomy and dismal to-day, I think; but I suppose—

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

I have but too much reason.

DAMIS.

What are you muttering about?

CLITANDER.

[*In a low voice.*

What a poor unhappy creature I am!

DAMIS.

Come, to give you both a little spirit, suppose I read you this little *billet* of mine, ha, marquis?

CLITANDER.

[*Aside, looking at the letter.*

What letter? can it be? surely 'tis from Hortensia: cruel creature!

DAMIS.

[*To Clitander.*

'Tis a letter would make a rival hang himself.

CLITANDER.

You are indeed a happy man, if you are beloved.

DAMIS.

That I most assuredly am; but you shall hear; your city ladies don't write in this style: observe her. [*He reads*] "At length I yield to the passion which has taken possession of my heart; I would have concealed it, but 'tis impossible: why should I not write what my eyes, no doubt, have a thousand times

informed you of? yes, my dearest Damis, I own I love you; the more perhaps because my heart, fearful of your youth, and fearful of itself, for a long time resisted my inclination, and told me I ought not to love you. After the confession of such a weakness, ought I not forever to reproach myself for it? but the more frankly I avow my tenderness for you, with the more care you ought to conceal it."

TRASIMON.

You take care, I see, to obey the lady's commands most punctually: a mighty discreet lover, to be sure!

CLITANDER.

Happy is that man who receives such letters, and never shows them.

DAMIS.

Well, what do you think of it? is it not—

TRASIMON.

Very strong indeed.

CLITANDER.

Charming.

DAMIS.

And the writer a thousand times more so. O if you did but know her name! but in this wicked world we must have a little discretion.

TRASIMON.

Well, we don't desire you to tell us.

CLITANDER.

You and I, Damis, love one another very well, but prudence—

TRASIMON.

So far from desiring you to acquaint us with particulars, that—

DAMIS.

Come, come, I love you both too well to dissemble with you: I know, you think, and the whole court has proclaimed it, that I have no affair here with anybody but Julia.

CLITANDER.

Nay, they have it from yourself; but as to us, we do not believe a word of it.

DAMIS.

To be sure, there was something between us, and the affair went on tolerably well till now: we loved one another, and then we parted, and then we met again; all the world knows that.

CLITANDER.

The world, I assure you, knows nothing at all about it.

DAMIS.

You think I'm very fond of her still, but you're mistaken; upon honor I am not.

TRASIMON.

'Tis nothing to me, whether you are or are not.

DAMIS.

Julia is handsome, that she is; but then she's fickle: the other—O the other is the very thing!

CLITANDER.

Well, and this charming woman—

DAMIS.

Come, I see you will know, and I must tell you: my dear friend, look at this picture, only look at it: did you ever see two such eyes? the most charming, most adorable creature; painted by Mace; that you know is saying everything; you know the features, don't you?

CLITANDER.

O heaven! 'tis Hortensia.

DAMIS.

You seem surprised.

TRASIMON.

You forget, sir, that Hortensia is my cousin, that she is tender of her honor, and a declaration of this kind—

DAMIS.

O give her up, give her up, man; why, I have six cousins; you shall have them all: make up to them, ogle them, deceive them, desert them, print their love-letters, with all my heart, it will give me no uneasiness: we should have enough to do indeed to be out of humor with one another, to vindicate the honor of our cousins: it's very well here, if every one can answer for themselves.

TRASIMON.

But Hortensia, sir—

DAMIS.

Is the woman I adore; and I tell you again, sir, she loves me, and me only; and to make you more angry, I intend to marry her.

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

Could I have been more cruelly injured?

DAMIS.

Our wedding will be no secret, but you shan't be there—cousin.

TRASIMON.

A cousin, sir, may have some power over her, and that you shall know soon. Your servant, sir.

SCENE VII.

DAMIS, CLITANDER.

DAMIS.

How I detest that fellow! the ridiculous pedant, with his affected airs of romantic virtue; a tedious, heavy, tiresome brute! you seem to be mighty curious about that picture, and examine it closely.

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

I must be master of myself, and dissemble.

DAMIS.

You may observe perhaps, one of the brilliants is missing at the corner there. It was a long chase yesterday, and there was such jostling and pushing one another; you must know I had four pictures loose in my pocket, and this unfortunately met with a mischance; the case broke, and a brilliant dropped out: as you go to town to-morrow, you may call at Frénaye's, he's dear, but clever in his way: I

wish you'd choose a diamond at his shop, as if it was for yourself; for, between you and me, I owe him a few pounds: here, take the picture, but don't show it to anybody. Your servant.

CLITANDER.

Aside.

Where am I?

DAMIS.

Well, God be with you, marquis, I shall depend on you. Take care, be discreet now.

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

Can he possibly do it?

DAMIS.

[*Returning.*

I love a discreet friend: you shall be my confidant: I'll tell you all my secrets. Is it possible for a man to be happy, to possess everything his heart can wish for, and not tell it to another? where's the joy of keeping our insipid pleasures to ourselves? one may as well have no friends as not trust them, and happiness uncommunicated is no happiness at all: I have shown you a letter, and a picture, but that's not all.

CLITANDER.

Why, what else have you?

DAMIS.

Do you know that this very night I am to meet her?

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

O dreadful! horrible!

"DO YOU KNOW THIS VERY NIGHT I AM TO MEET HER?"

DAMIS.

To-night, Clitander, before the ball is over, alone and unsuspected, I am to meet her by appointment in this garden.

CLITANDER.

[*Aside.*

O I am lost, undone: this last cruel stroke—

DAMIS.

Is not that charming, my friend? dost not rejoice with me, boy?

CLITANDER.

And will Hortensia meet you?

DAMIS.

Most certainly; just at dusk I expect her; but the declining sun already gives me notice of my approaching happiness: I must be gone. I'll go to your lodgings, I think, and dress: let me see, I must have two pounds of powder for my hair, and some of the most exquisite perfume; then will I return in triumph, and finish the affair immediately. Do you, in the meantime, prowl about here, that you may have some share in the happiness of your friend; I shall leave you here as my deputy, to keep off impertinent rivals.

SCENE VIII.

CLITANDER.

[*Alone.*

How hard a task it was to conceal my grief and my resentment! after a whole year of sincerest passion, when Hortensia's heart, wearied of resistance,

began at length to soften and relent, for Damis thus to come and change her in an instant! one fortunate moment has done what my long and faithful services in vain solicited: nay, she even anticipated his wishes, gave this young coxcomb that picture which I had so much better deserved: she writes to him, too! O that letter would have killed me with ecstasy: and then, to make my misery complete, she has written to me this morning, never to see her more: this hair-brained fellow has got hold of her heart, and will carry her off in triumph: O Hortensia, how cruelly hast thou deceived me!

SCENE IX.

CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

CLITANDER.

So, Pasquin, I have found out my rival.

PASQUIN.

Indeed, sir? so much the worse.

CLITANDER.

Yes: she's in love with that blockhead, Damis.

PASQUIN.

Who told you so?

CLITANDER.

Himself: the proud coxcomb boasted to me of the treasure he had stolen from me. Here, Pasquin, look at this picture; out of mere vanity he has left it in my hands, only that he may triumph the more. O Hortensia, who could ever have believed that Damis would supplant Clitander!

PASQUIN.

Damis is a good and pretty fellow.

CLITANDER.

[*Collaring him.*

Ha! rascal, an impertinent young fool, that—

PASQUIN.

Very true, sir, and perhaps—but, for heaven's sake, don't strangle me, sir: between you and me, sir, he's nothing but a babbler, a prig—

CLITANDER.

Be he what he will, she prefers him to me, Pasquin; therefore now is the time to exert thy usual skill, and serve me. Hortensia and my rival are to meet this night in the garden, by appointment; find out some method, if possible, to prevent it.

PASQUIN.

But, sir—

CLITANDER.

Thy brain, I know, is fertile; take money, as much as thou wilt: for heaven's sake, disappoint my rival: while he is tricking out his insignificant person, we may rob him of the happy moment: since he is a fool, let us take the advantage of his folly, and by some means or other keep him away from this place.

PASQUIN.

And this you think mighty easy to be done: why, sir, I would sooner engage to stop the course of a river, a stag on a heath, or a bird in the air, a mad poet repeating his own verses, a litigious woman that has a suit in chancery, a parson hunting after

a benefice, a high-wind, a tempest, or thunder and lightning, than a young coxcomb going to a rendezvous with his mistress.

CLITANDER.

And will you then abandon me to despair?

PASQUIN.

Stay: a thought is just come into my head: let me see, Hortensia and Damis have never seen me?

CLITANDER.

Never.

PASQUIN.

You have got her picture?

CLITANDER.

I have.

PASQUIN.

Good: and you have got a letter that she wrote you.

CLITANDER.

Ay, and a cruel one it is.

PASQUIN.

Her ladyship's orders, I think, to you, never to visit her again.

CLITANDER.

It is so.

PASQUIN.

The letter is without a direction I think?

CLITANDER.

It is, rascal, and what of that?

PASQUIN.

Give me the picture and the letter immediately; give them me, I say.

CLITANDER.

Shall I give a picture into other hands that was intrusted to my care?

PASQUIN.

Come, come, no ceremony: a pretty scruple indeed! give them me.

CLITANDER.

Well, but, Pasquin—

PASQUIN.

Leave everything to me, and rely on my discretion.

CLITANDER.

You want to—

PASQUIN.

Away, away: here comes Hortensia.

SCENE X.

HORTENSIA, NERINE.

HORTENSIA.

What you say, Nerine, is very true; Clitander is a worthy man; I know the warmth of his passion for me, and the sincerity of it: he is sober, sensible, constant, and discreet: I ought to esteem him, and so I do; but Damis is my taste: I find, by the struggles of my own heart, that love is not always the

reward of virtue; we are always won by an agreeable outside; and for one who is captivated by the perfections of the soul, a thousand are caught by the eye; I blush at my own inconstancy: but Damis comes no more here, I assure you.

NERINE.

What a strange humor this is! how resolute you are!

HORTENSIA.

No: I ought not to be there first, and positively I will not.

NERINE.

Are you afraid of the first meeting?

HORTENSIA.

To tell you the truth, Damis takes up all my thoughts: this very day I have had a visit from his mother, who has greatly increased my prejudices in favor of her son: I see she is extremely eager for the match, and presses it in the warmest manner: but I want to see the man himself in private, and sound his real sentiments.

NERINE.

You have no doubt of his regard for you?

HORTENSIA.

None: I believe, nay, I know he loves me; but I want to hear him tell me so a thousand and a thousand times over: I want to see if he deserves my love, to know his temper, his character, and his heart: I would not yield blindly to inclination, but judge of him, if I could, without passion or prejudice.

SCENE XI.

HORTENSIA, NERINE, PASQUIN.

PASQUIN.

Madam, my master Damis has sent me here to acquaint you privately—

HORTENSIA.

Is he not coming himself?

PASQUIN.

No, madam.

NERINE.

The little villain!

HORTENSIA.

Not come to me?

PASQUIN.

No, madam: but, as in point of honor he thinks himself obliged, he has sent you back this portrait.

HORTENSIA.

My picture!

PASQUIN.

Please to take it, madam.

HORTENSIA.

Am I awake?

PASQUIN.

Pray, ma'am, make haste, for I am really in a hurry: I have two more pictures to carry back for my master, and two to receive: and so, madam, till we meet again, I am your most obsequious—

HORTENSIA.

Perfidious wretch! I shall die with grief.

PASQUIN.

He desired me, moreover, madam, to inform you, that you need not ogle him any more, and that for the future he should be glad if you would find out some other dupe to laugh at besides himself.

SCENE XII.

HORTENSIA, NERINE, DAMIS, PASQUIN.

DAMIS.

[*At the farther end of the stage.*

Here I am to meet the dear object of my wishes.

PASQUIN.

Ha! Damis! then I am caught; but I'll take courage, however, and proceed. [*He runs up to Damis and takes him aside.*] I belong, sir, to Lady Hortensia, and have the honor to be employed on her little affairs; I have, sir, here a billet-doux for you.

HORTENSIA.

What a change is here! what a reward for my tender passion!

DAMIS.

[*Reads.*

Let me see, ha! how's this? "You deserve my regard, I know the esteem that is due to your virtues, but I cannot love you." Was ever such abominable perfidy? this is what I little expected indeed; but it shall be known; the public shall be ac-

quainted with it: it shall be no secret at court, I can assure her.

HORTENSIA.

[*At the other part of the stage.*

Could he carry his infamous perfidy so far as this?

DAMIS.

There, madam, you see what value I set on your correspondence.

[*He tears the letter.*

PASQUIN.

[*Running up to Hortensia.*

O madam, I blush for his behavior: you saw him tear the letter, which you condescended to write to the ungrateful man.

HORTENSIA.

He has sent back my picture: perish, thou wretched image of my ineffectual charms!

[*She throws down the picture.*

PASQUIN.

[*Coming back to Damis.*

There, sir, you see how she treats you; she has thrown away your picture, and broken it in pieces.

DAMIS.

There are some ladies in the world who receive the original in a very different manner, I can assure her.

HORTENSIA.

O Nerine, what a regard I had for this ungrateful man! Tell me, fellow, [*Speaking to Pasquin, and*

giving him money] for whose sake is it I am thus deserted? to what happy object am I sacrificed?

PASQUIN.

O madam, to five or six beauties, with whom he pretends to be in love, though he cares as little for them as for yourself; but your most dangerous rival is the fair Julia.

DAMIS.

[*Coming up to Pasquin.*

Here, take this ring, and now tell me honestly, on what impertinent court fool your sweet mistress has fixed her affections.

PASQUIN.

No one, sir, deserves her so well as yourself; but, to tell you the truth, there is a certain young abbé who ogles her perpetually; not to mention that I frequently help her cousin Trasimon over the garden-wall of an evening.

DAMIS.

I'm glad of it: this is excellent news; I'll put it into a ballad.

HORTENSIA.

The worst of it is, Nerine, that to make me still more unhappy, this affair will make a noise in the world, and I shall be horribly exposed: come, let us be gone, I will retire, and hide my tears.

PASQUIN.

[*To Hortensia.*

You have no more commands for me, madam? [*To Damis*] Can I be of any further service to you, sir? Heaven preserve you both!

SCENE XIII.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, NERINE.

HORTENSIA.

[*Returning.*

Why do I stay in this place?

DAMIS.

I ought to be dancing at the ball now.

HORTENSIA.

He seems thoughtful, but 'tis not on my account.

DAMIS.

I am mistaken, or she looks this way; I'll even make up to her.

HORTENSIA.

I'll avoid him.

DAMIS.

O stay, Hortensia, can you fly me, can you avoid me? cruel, perfidious woman!

HORTENSIA.

Ungrateful man, leave me to myself, and let me try to hate you.

DAMIS.

That, madam, will be an easy task, thanks to your infidelity.

HORTENSIA.

'Tis what I ought to do: 'tis but my duty now, thanks to your injustice.

DAMIS.

And are we met at last, Hortensia, but to quarrel?

HORTENSIA.

How can Damis talk thus, and at the same time affront me, and love another! O Julia, Julia!

DAMIS.

After your writing me such a letter, madam—

HORTENSIA.

After your sending back my picture, sir—

DAMIS.

Could I send back your picture? cruel woman!

HORTENSIA.

Could I ever write a line to you that was not full of love and tenderness? perfidious man!

DAMIS.

Madam, I will consent to leave the court, to give up the posts I enjoy, and all my hopes of future preferment, to be despised and condemned by the whole world, if ever I sent you back the picture, the precious treasure which love intrusted to my care.

HORTENSIA.

And may I never be loved by the dear charmer of my soul, if I ever sent you that letter! but here, here, ungrateful man, is the picture your insolence returned me, the reward of tender friendship, which you despised; 'tis here, and can you—

DAMIS.

Ha! here comes Clitander.

SCENE XIV.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, CLITANDER, NERINE, PASQUIN.

DAMIS.

My dear marquis, come here; where are you going? He, madam, will unravel all.

HORTENSIA.

Clitander? why, what does he know of the matter?

DAMIS.

Don't be alarmed, madam, he is my friend, to whom I have opened my whole heart: he is my confidant, let him be yours too: you must, indeed you must.

HORTENSIA.

Let us be gone this moment, Nerine: O heaven! what a ridiculous creature!

SCENE XV.

DAMIS, CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

DAMIS.

O marquis, I am the most unhappy of men; let me speak to you; I must follow her: observe me. [*To Hortensia*] Stay, Hortensia; nay, then I must after her.

SCENE XVI.

CLITANDER, PASQUIN.

CLITANDER.

I don't know what to think of it, Pasquin; I understood, by what you told me, that they had quarrelled.

PASQUIN.

I thought so, too: I'm sure I played my part: most certainly they have cause to hate one another; but, for aught I know, a minute's time may reconcile them again.

CLITANDER.

Let us observe which way they turn.

PASQUIN.

Hortensia seems as if she was going to her own house.

CLITANDER.

Damis follows her close: by his being behind, however, it looks as if she shunned him.

PASQUIN.

She flies but slowly, and the lover pursues.

CLITANDER.

She turns her head back, and Damis talks to her, but to no purpose.

PASQUIN.

I fancy not, but Damis stops her often.

CLITANDER.

He kneels to her, but she treats him with contempt.

PASQUIN.

O but observe, now she looks tenderly on him: if so, you're undone.

CLITANDER.

She is gone into her own house, and has dismissed him: joy and fear, hope and despair, at once surround me; I can't imagine how it will end.

SCENE XVII.

CLITANDER, DAMIS, PASQUIN.

DAMIS.

O my dear marquis, I'm glad you're here; for heaven's sake, inform me, what can be the meaning that Hortensia forbids my coming nigh her? how happens it that the picture, which I trusted to you, is now in her hands? answer me.

CLITANDER.

You amaze and confound me.

DAMIS.

[*To Pasquin.*

As for you, sir rascal there, the servant of Hortensia, at least the pretended one, I'll make an end of you this moment.

PASQUIN.

[*To Clitander.*

Protect me, sir.

CLITANDER.

[*To Damis.*

Well, sir—

DAMIS.

'Tis in vain—

CLITANDER.

Spare this poor fellow, let me entreat you, do.

DAMIS.

What interest have you in him?

CLITANDER.

I beg of you, and seriously.

DAMIS.

Out of regard to you, I will withhold my resentment; but tell me, scoundrel, the whole black contrivance.

PASQUIN.

O sir, 'tis a most mysterious affair; but I'll let you into some surprising secrets, if you'll promise not to reveal them.

DAMIS.

I'll promise nothing, and insist on knowing all.

PASQUIN.

You shall, sir, but Hortensia is coming this way, and will overhear us. [*To Clitander*] Come, sir, let us to the masquerade, and there I'll tell you everything.

SCENE XVIII.

TRASIMON, NERINE, HORTENSIA *in a domino, with a masque in her hand.*

TRASIMON.

Take my word for it, Hortensia, this young coxcomb will cover us with shame and ignominy, to show your letters and your picture about in this public manner: 'tis intolerable: I saw them myself; but I'll punish the scoundrel as he deserves.

HORTENSIA.

[*To Nerine.*

Is Julia then so beautiful in his eyes? do you think he's really in love with her?

TRASIMON.

No matter whether he is or no: but, if he dishonors you, it concerns me nearly; I know a relative's duty, and will perform it.

HORTENSIA.

[*To Nerine.*

Do you imagine he is engaged to Julia? give me your opinion.

NERINE.

One may know that easily enough from himself.

HORTENSIA.

O Nerine, he was excessively indiscreet; I ought to hate, yet perhaps still love him. O how he wept,

and swore he loved, that he adored me, and that he would conceal our mutual passion!

TRASIMON.

There, I'm sure, he promised more than he will perform.

HORTENSIA.

For the last time, however, I mean to try him: he's gone to the masquerade, there I shall be sure to find him: you must dissemble, Nerine: go and tell him that Julia expects him here with impatience: this masque at least will hide my blushes: the faithless man will take me for Julia: I shall know what he thinks of her, and of myself: on this meeting will depend my choice or my contempt of him. [*To Trasimon.*] You must not be far off: endeavor if you can, to keep Clitander near you: wait for me here, or hereabouts, and I will call you when there is occasion.

SCENE XIX.

HORTENSIA.

[*Alone, in a domino, with a masque in her hand.*

'At length it is time to fix my wavering affections; under the cover of this masque, and the name of Julia, I shall know whether his indiscretion was owing to excess of love, or vanity; whether I ought to pardon, or to detest him: but here he comes.

SCENE XX.

HORTENSIA *masqued,* DAMIS.

DAMIS.

[*Not seeing Hortensia.*

This seems to be the favorite spot for ladies to make their assignations in: well, I'll follow the fashion: fashion, in France, determines everything, regulates precedency, honor, good-breeding, merit, wit, and pleasure.

HORTENSIA.

[*Aside.*

The coxcomb!

DAMIS.

If this affair of mine could but be known, in two years' time the whole court would run mad for love of me: a good setting out here is everything: then Ægle, and Doris, and—O there's no counting them, such a group, such a sweet prospect! O the pretty creatures—

HORTENSIA.

[*Aside.*

Light, vain man!

DAMIS.

O Julia, is it you? I know you in spite of that envious masque: my heart cannot be mistaken; come, come, my dear Julia, take off that cruel veil that hides thy beauties from me; do not, in pity do not, conceal those sweet looks, those tender smiles, that were meant to reward that love which they inspired; thou art the only woman on earth whom I adore.

HORTENSIA.

Let me tell you, Damis, you are a stranger to my humor and disposition; I should despise a heart that never felt for any woman but myself; I like my lovers should be more fashionable; that twenty young flirts should be hunting after him; that his passion for me should draw him away from a hundred contending beauties; I must have some noble sacrifice offered up to me, or I'll never accept of his services: a lover less esteemed would be of no value, I should despise him.

DAMIS.

I can make you easy on that head, my dear; I have made some pretty good conquests, and perhaps as expeditiously as most men: I believe I can boast of tolerable success that way: many a fine woman has run after me; another man would be vain of it: I could reckon up a few of your nice ladies who are not over-coy with me.

HORTENSIA.

Well, but who, who are they?

DAMIS.

Only give the word, my Julia, and I begin the sacrifice: there is, first, the little Isabel; secondly, the lively, smart Erminia; then there's Clarice, Ægle, Doris—

HORTENSIA.

Poor, pitiful offerings! I could have a hundred such every day: these will never do: they are loved, and turned off again twenty times in a week: let me have some respectable names, women of character, such as I may triumph over without a blush: if you

could reckon among your captives, one, who, before she saw the incomparable Damis, was invulnerable, one who in all actions paid the strictest regard to decency and decorum, some modest, prudent fair, who never felt a weakness but for you, that would be the woman.

DAMIS.

[*Sitting down by her.*

Now then, observe me: I have a mistress who exactly resembles in every feature the picture you have drawn: but you would not have me be so indiscreet as to—

HORTENSIA.

Not for the world.

DAMIS.

If I were imprudent enough to tell her name, I should call her—Hortensia. Why are you startled at it? I think not of her while my Julia's here: she is neither young nor handsome when you are by: besides, there is a certain young abbé who is very familiar with her; and, between you and me, her cousin Trasimon is too apt to come to her in an evening over the garden-wall.

HORTENSIA.

[*Aside.*

To join calumny thus to his infidelity, execrable villain! but I must dissemble: pray, Damis, on what footing are you with Hortensia? does she love you?

DAMIS.

O to distraction, that's the truth of it.

HORTENSIA.

[*Aside.*

Impudence and falsehood to the highest degree!

DAMIS.

'Tis even so, I assure you, I would not tell you a lie for the world.

HORTENSIA.

[*Aside.*

The villain!

DAMIS.

But what signifies thinking about her? we did not meet here to talk of Hortensia: come, let us rather—

HORTENSIA.

I can never believe Hortensia would ever have given herself up so totally to you.

DAMIS.

I tell you, I have it under her own hand.

HORTENSIA.

I don't believe a word of it.

DAMIS.

'Tis insulting me to doubt it.

HORTENSIA.

Let me see it then.

DAMIS.

You injure me, madam: there, read, perhaps you know her hand.

[*Gives her the letter.*

HORTENSIA.

[*Unmasking.*

I do, villain, and know your treachery: at length I have in some measure atoned for my folly, and have luckily recovered both the picture and the let-

ter, which I had ventured to trust in such unworthy hands: 'tis done: now Trasimon and Clitander, appear.

SCENE XXI.

HORTENSIA, DAMIS, TRASIMON, CLITANDER.

HORTENSIA.

[*To Clitander.*

If I have not yet offended you beyond a possibility of pardon; if you can still love Hortensia, my hand, my fortune, and my life are yours.

CLITANDER.

O Hortensia, behold at your feet a despairing lover, who receives your kind offer with joy and transport.

TRASIMON.

[*To Damis.*

Did I not tell you, sir, I should bring her to a right way of thinking? this marriage, sir, is my making: now, Damis, fare you well, and henceforth, learn to dissemble better or never attempt it more.

DAMIS.

Just heaven! for the future how shall I venture to speak at all?

END.

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